



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

# **Communication & Leadership**

*Lessons for upper  
elementary students, aged  
8-11*

**Shop all our Future Ready  
Resource Packs**





Seltrove Education, an IB Source company

# Communication & Leadership

*Lessons for upper elementary students,  
aged 8-11*

Editors:  
Janna Nobleza  
Suresh Korapati  
Andrew Culley  
Emelen De Jesus

Published 2025 by Seltrove, an imprint of IB Source Inc,  
Copyright IB Source, Inc.

## **Copyright and Use Restrictions**

This publication is protected by copyright laws. All rights are strictly reserved by the publishers. Unauthorized duplication, reproduction, storage, or distribution of any part of this work, by any means including but not limited to electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or micro copying, is prohibited without the express written consent of the publishing authorities.

## **Accuracy Disclaimer**

The authors and publishers have exerted every effort to ensure that the information within this publication is both accurate and complete. Despite these efforts, no guarantee is made regarding the content's infallibility. The authors and publishers do not assume liability for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies found in the publication, nor for any resultant loss or damage. Any questions or inquiries on rights please email [info@seltrove.com](mailto:info@seltrove.com)





# Teacher/Parent Guide

## Welcome

Communication and leadership continue to grow and take shape throughout the upper elementary years. As students gain more independence, friendships deepen, teamwork becomes more complex, and their words and choices begin to carry greater influence.

This workbook is designed to help 3rd through 5th grade students strengthen the skills that shape how they listen, speak, make decisions, and positively influence others.

Throughout these lessons, students will explore what it means to use their voice with purpose. They will practice listening carefully, speaking with confidence, considering different perspectives, and taking responsibility for their actions.

Students will learn that leadership is not about being the loudest voice or being “in charge.” Leadership is about setting a positive example, making thoughtful choices, and helping others succeed.

## Learning Objectives

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

- Practice active listening skills, including using focused body language, waiting their turn, paraphrasing ideas, and asking thoughtful follow-up questions.
- Communicate ideas clearly, confidently, and respectfully in both small and large group settings.
- Explain the difference between confident communication and bossy or controlling behavior.
- Use reasoning words such as because, so, and for example to support their thinking.
- Ask strong, respectful questions that deepen conversations and invite others to share.
- Consider different perspectives before responding or making decisions.
- Speak up respectfully when they disagree or need to set a boundary.
- Take initiative and responsibility for their actions, including acknowledging mistakes and repairing harm when needed.
- Recognize how their words and actions influence others in positive and negative ways.
- Lead by example through encouragement, fairness, responsibility, and thoughtful decision-making.
- Understand that leadership is about strengthening the group—not seeking attention or control.



# Teacher/Parent Guide

## Learning Rationale

Communication and leadership skills continue to develop in powerful ways during the upper elementary years. Students are becoming more independent thinkers, forming deeper friendships, participating in more complex group work, and navigating situations that require stronger decision-making skills. As their world expands, so does their influence.

Students benefit from explicit instruction in how to listen actively, communicate confidently, take responsibility for their actions, and understand how their choices shape their reputation and impact others. Leadership is no longer just about learning to take turns or share—it becomes about integrity, thoughtful decision-making, collaboration, and positive influence.

When students are guided to reflect on their communication habits and choices, they begin to recognize that leadership is not about authority, popularity, or control. Instead, it is about how they use their voice, how they respond to challenges, how they support others, and how they contribute to the overall strength of a team.

## Building communication and leadership skills in upper elementary helps:



Strengthen active listening and meaningful dialogue



Develop confident, respectful communication



Promote integrity and responsible decision-making



Encourage accountability and ownership



Build awareness of influence dynamics



Lay the groundwork for ethical and collaborative leadership



# An Introduction for Teachers & Parents

These lessons are designed for upper elementary students (ages 8–11) and can be used in classrooms, homeschool settings, or small instructional groups. Each lesson includes a teacher lesson plan, a student-friendly reading with an anchor text, guided practice activities, and optional at-home extensions.

Across the five lessons, students develop essential communication and leadership skills that strengthen how they listen, speak, make decisions, and contribute to a group. In grades three through five, students experience more complex teamwork, greater independence, and increased social influence. As expectations grow—academically and socially—students benefit from structured opportunities to practice using their voice responsibly, listening actively, and making thoughtful choices that affect others.

The lessons are:

**Structured yet Flexible** – Each lesson can be taught in a single session or extended across multiple days through discussion, modeling, role-play, reflection, or real-world application.

**Skill-Focused** – Each lesson targets a core leadership skill: active listening, confident communication, integrity and responsible decision-making, supportive leadership, and positive team influence. Students build understanding step by step, seeing how these skills connect and reinforce one another.

**Developmentally Aligned** – Lessons reflect the real experiences of upper elementary learners, including group projects, classroom discussions, shifting friendships, peer influence, and growing responsibility for their choices and behavior.

You do not need to be a specialist to teach these lessons. Each lesson includes clear objectives, step-by-step guidance, and support notes for diverse learners. Student pages use accessible language to help learners understand not only what effective communication and leadership look like, but why these skills matter and how to apply them in everyday situations.

As students prepare for middle school, these lessons support the development of confidence, accountability, collaboration, and positive influence. The goal is to equip students with practical communication and leadership tools they can use at school, at home, and in their communities—now and as they grow.



# Table of Contents

## 01 Lesson 1

### Your Voice Matters

- Activity 1.1 Confidence or Bossy?
- Activity 1.2 Because Builder Challenge
- Activity 1.3 Think-Plan-Speak Organizer
- Activity 1.4 Body Language Mirror
- Activity 1.5 The Silent Ideas Scenario
- Activity 1.6: My Bvoice Plan

## 02 Lesson 2

### Listening Like a Leader

- Activity 2.1 Listening in Action
- Activity 2.2 "So You're Saying..." Practice
- Activity 2.3 Clarifying Question Builder
- Activity 2.4 Pause Power Practice
- Activity 2.5 Misunderstanding Makeover
- Activity 2.6 Listening Report Card

## 03 Lesson 3

### Seeing the Other Side

- Activity 3.1 Perspective Exploration
- Activity 3.2 Draw It From Another View
- Activity 3.3 Perspective Switch
- Activity 3.4 Assumption Detective
- Activity 3.5 Perspective Language Practice
- Activity 3.6 Perspective Leader Decision

## 04 Lesson 4

### Speaking Up the Right Way

- Activity 4.1 "I" Statement Builder
- Activity 4.2 Rewrite the Reaction
- Activity 4.3 Silent Leadership
- Activity 4.4 Speak up Scenarios

## 05 Lesson 5

### Taking Initiative

- Activity 5.1 Initiative or Wait?
- Activity 5.2 Responsibility Line
- Activity 5.3 The Next Right Step Challenge
- Activity 5.4 Ask for Help or Handle It?
- Activity 5.5 Leadership in Small Moments



# Universal Design for Learning

## Overview

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

UDL recognizes that students learn in different ways. Some learn best through discussion, others through visuals, movement, or hands-on practice. This pack intentionally offers multiple ways for students to engage with content, demonstrate understanding, and practice skills, allowing adults to adapt lessons without changing the learning goals.

## Multiple Means of Engagement

(How students stay interested and motivated)

- Lessons include a variety of activity types such as sorting, scenario analysis, drawing, role-play, movement, and discussion to support engagement.
- Students are offered choices whenever possible (how to respond, which scenario to explore, or how to demonstrate understanding).
- Activities are designed to be flexible in length and format, allowing adults to adjust pacing based on attention, energy, or emotional readiness.
- Content is grounded in realistic social situations students commonly experience, making learning meaningful and relevant.

Adult Tip: If a student seems disengaged, try changing the response format (for example, drawing instead of writing, or role-play instead of discussion) rather than repeating the same task.

## Multiple Means of Representation

(How information is presented and understood)

- Key ideas are presented using clear language, visuals, icons, examples, and texts.
- Short readings and scenarios introduce concepts before moving into reflection or discussion.
- Consistent routines, sentence starters, and guided questions support comprehension and confidence.
- Concepts are intentionally revisited across lessons to reinforce understanding and application over time.

Adult Tip: Read instructions aloud when needed, reference visuals during explanations, and model one example before asking students to work independently.



# Universal Design for Learning

## Multiple Means of Action and Expression

(How students show what they know)

Students are offered multiple ways to demonstrate understanding, including:

- Writing short responses
- Drawing or visual representation
- Sorting, matching, or categorizing
- Acting out scenarios or role-play
- Speaking or participating in a discussion
- Dictating responses to an adult, when needed

Writing is supported but not required to demonstrate understanding. Lessons emphasize expression of ideas over perfection, allowing students to choose formats that match their strengths.

Role-play, discussion, and hands-on activities provide opportunities for students to practice relationship skills in low-pressure, supportive ways.

**Adult Tip:** Accept responses in multiple forms. Focus on the thinking or skill being demonstrated rather than the format used to express it.

## Flexible Use Across Settings

This pack is designed to work in:

- classrooms
- homeschool environments
- counseling or small-group settings
- one-on-one adult-child work

Activities can be:

- used as written
- shortened
- combined
- revisited multiple times

There is no required order for activities within a lesson.

## Emotional Safety and Developmental Support

Lessons avoid shame, punishment, or labeling behavior as “bad.”

- Mistakes are framed as part of learning and growth.
- Students are never required to share personal experiences.
- Adults are encouraged to observe and listen rather than correct or judge responses.



# Pre-Assessment



**Seltrove Education, an IB Source company**



# Pre-Assessment Lesson Plan

## Learning Objectives

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

1. Show what they already understand about listening, speaking clearly, taking initiative, and influencing others positively.
2. Demonstrate how they currently participate in class discussions and group conversations.
3. Reveal the strategies they use when making decisions, handling mistakes, or responding to disagreements.
4. Show how they use their voice — whether they speak up confidently, hesitate, interrupt, dominate, or stay silent.
5. Provide a starting point for measuring growth in communication and leadership skills.

## Learning Rationale

The pre-assessment helps teachers and parents understand how upper elementary students currently communicate and lead within their school environment.

As students gain independence in grades 3–5, their words and choices begin to carry more influence. Some students naturally step forward, others hang back, and many are still learning how to balance confidence with respect. Leadership at this age is still developing, and students often show a wide range of strengths and areas for growth.

This activity is not a test. Instead, it offers an opportunity to observe how students:

- Listen during discussions
- Express ideas clearly
- Consider different perspectives
- Speak up respectfully
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Influence peers in positive or negative ways



# Pre-Assessment Lesson Plan

## Step 1: Set the Tone (3–5 minutes)

- “Today we’re going to look at how people handle different communication and leadership situations. There are no right or wrong answers. Everyone responds differently, and this activity simply helps me understand how our class listens, speaks, makes decisions, and uses their voice.”
- If students ask, “What’s the right answer?” reassure them that you are not looking for perfect leadership — you are looking for honest thinking.

## Step 2: Independent Completion (10–15 minutes)

- Students read each scenario and select the response that best matches what they would most likely do.
- Encourage students to answer quickly and honestly.

## Step 3: Optional Pair or Whole-Group Reflection (5–10 minutes)

Choose 2–3 questions to briefly discuss.

Sample prompts:

- “Did anyone notice that people handled the same situation differently?”
- “What might make someone choose to speak up — or stay quiet?”
- “How can the same situation feel different to different people?”
- “What makes a response confident versus controlling?”

Do not ask students to defend their choices.

## Step 4: Close the Activity (2–3 minutes)

Say: “This was just our starting point. Over the next few lessons, we’ll practice skills like active listening, confident communication, perspective-taking, taking initiative, and leading by example. It’s completely okay if your answers would change later — that’s how growth happens.”

## Teacher Reflection & Insight Guide

Rather than scoring answers, look for patterns.

- Do students demonstrate active listening, or focus mainly on speaking?
- Are students willing to use their voice respectfully, or do they hesitate to participate?
- Do students think about different perspectives before responding?
- Do they speak confidently without dominating?
- Do they pause before acting, or react quickly without thinking?
- Do students take responsibility for mistakes, or shift blame?
- Do they influence peers positively, neutrally, or negatively?
- Do they understand that leadership includes repair and accountability?



# Pre-Assessment

**Directions:** Read each question and pick the answer that most describes you right now. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. During a group discussion, someone is sharing an idea. What do you usually do?
  - A. Wait quietly but think about what you want to say next
  - B. Listen carefully and try to understand their idea
  - C. Interrupt if you disagree
  - D. Stop paying attention
  
2. When someone explains something to you, how do you usually respond?
  - A. Say “okay” and move on
  - B. Ask a follow-up question to learn more
  - C. Change the topic to your own idea
  - D. Don’t respond much
  
3. You disagree with a classmate’s idea. What are you most likely to do?
  - A. Stay quiet even if you disagree
  - B. Share your opinion respectfully and explain why
  - C. Tell them they’re wrong
  - D. Roll your eyes or show frustration
  
4. During a discussion, you notice one person talking over others. What do you usually do?
  - A. Stay quiet
  - B. Help balance the conversation respectfully
  - C. Talk louder to compete
  - D. Disengage
  
5. You have an idea you believe would help your team. What do you usually do?
  - A. Keep it to yourself
  - B. Share it clearly and explain your thinking
  - C. Say it loudly so people notice
  - D. Wait for someone else to say something similar



## Pre-Assessment

6. You make a mistake that affects your group. What are you most likely to do?
  - A. Pretend it didn't happen
  - B. Admit it and try to fix it
  - C. Blame someone else
  - D. Stay quiet and hope no one notices
  
7. You see others making a choice that feels unfair. What do you usually do?
  - A. Ignore it
  - B. Speak up respectfully
  - C. Join in
  - D. Tell an adult immediately without trying to help
  
8. When someone gives you feedback, how do you usually react?
  - A. Feel upset and shut down
  - B. Listen and think about how to improve
  - C. Argue right away
  - D. Ignore it
  
9. You notice someone is being left out of a conversation. What do you usually do?
  - A. Focus on your own part
  - B. Invite them into the discussion
  - C. Ignore it
  - D. Let someone else handle it
  
10. During a disagreement, what do you usually do first?
  - A. React quickly without thinking
  - B. Pause and think before responding
  - C. Raise your voice
  - D. Walk away without saying anything
  
11. When something goes well in a group, what do you usually do?
  - A. Stay quiet
  - B. Recognize others' contributions
  - C. Focus on your own part
  - D. Move on quickly



## Pre-Assessment

12. When someone is speaking, what does your body language usually show?
- A. Looking around or fidgeting
  - B. Facing them and paying attention
  - C. Crossing your arms or showing frustration
  - D. Talking to someone else
13. If a friend pressures you to do something you're unsure about, what are you most likely to do?
- A. Go along with it
  - B. Say no respectfully
  - C. Get angry
  - D. Avoid answering
14. When you want others to agree with your idea, what do you usually do?
- A. Give up quickly
  - B. Explain your reasons calmly
  - C. Insist until they agree
  - D. Stay silent
15. When people look to someone to guide a situation, what do you usually do?
- A. Hope someone else steps in
  - B. Offer ideas or direction calmly
  - C. Try to control everything
  - D. Stay out of it



# Lesson 1

## Your Voice Matters

### **Essential Question**

How can I use my voice clearly and confidently so others understand me?

### **Core Idea**

Strong leaders use their voice clearly, respectfully, and confidently to help others understand their thinking.



# Teacher Lesson: Your Voice Matters

## Learning Objectives

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

1. Explain why their voice is important in discussions and group settings.
2. Identify the difference between confident communication and bossy behavior.
3. Organize their thoughts before speaking.
4. Use clear sentences and reasoning words (because, so, for example) to explain their ideas.
5. Demonstrate strong body language when speaking (eye contact, posture, steady voice).
6. Practice sharing an idea in a small group or class discussion.

## Learning Rationale

Upper elementary students are developing stronger opinions, deeper friendships, and greater independence. At this stage, many students either begin stepping forward confidently — or holding back out of fear of being wrong, judged, or ignored.

Before students can learn to lead responsibly, they must first believe that their voice has value.

This lesson establishes the foundation for the entire Communication & Leadership pack by:

- Building confidence in speaking
- Teaching clarity over volume
- Differentiating assertiveness from control
- Encouraging thoughtful participation
- Framing leadership as influence, not dominance

When students understand that leadership begins with clear, respectful communication, they are more prepared to engage in active listening, perspective-taking, initiative, and leading by example in later lessons.

This lesson sets the tone: Leadership starts with how you use your voice.



# Reading Guide: Your Voice Matters

## Why use a reading guide?

This guide helps teachers use any read-aloud text to reinforce the lesson: *Strong leaders use their voice clearly, respectfully, and confidently.*

The goal is not to analyze the entire story, but to notice:

- When characters speak up
- When they stay silent
- How they communicate
- How their words influence others

## Before Reading Prompts

- What does it mean to use your voice?
- Does using your voice always mean talking a lot?
- What makes someone sound confident instead of bossy?
- Have you ever wanted to say something but didn't? Why?

Tell students: As we read today, listen for moments when a character chooses to speak up—or to stay quiet.

## During Reading Discussion Questions

### Noticing Voice & Confidence

- Did this character speak up or stay quiet?
- What might they have been thinking before speaking?
- Was their message clear?
- Did they explain their thinking?
- How did others respond to their voice?

### Confident vs. Bossy

- Did the character sound confident or controlling?
- What words or tone made the difference?
- How could they say it in a clearer or more respectful way?

### Organizing Thoughts

- Did the character explain why they felt that way?
- Did they use reasons or examples?
- What could they have added to make their message clearer?



# Reading Guide: Your Voice Matters

## Body Language & Tone

- What clues tell us how the character was speaking?
- How might their body language have affected others?
- Would this message sound different if said calmly?

## Influence & Impact

- Did their words change what happened next?
- Did speaking up help or hurt the situation?
- What might have happened if they stayed silent?

## After Reading Reflection Questions

Choose 2–3:

- When is it hard to use your voice?
- Why might someone stay quiet even if they have a good idea?
- What makes people more likely to listen to someone?
- What's the difference between being loud and being clear?

## Recommended Read-Aloud Titles

These books contain strong moments of voice, confidence, and influence.

*Because of Winn-Dixie* – Kate DiCamillo

- Themes: speaking honestly, vulnerability, friendship
- Great for noticing when Opal shares her feelings clearly.

*Wonder* – R.J. Palacio

- Themes: standing up, perspective, influence
- Strong examples of confident vs. quiet voices.

*The One and Only Ivan* – Katherine Applegate

- Themes: advocacy, speaking up for others
- Great for discussions about influence and courage.

*Fish in a Tree* – Lynda Mullaly Hunt

- Themes: self-confidence, speaking up
- Powerful examples of finding your voice.



# Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Supports

## Lesson 1: Your Voice Matters

### Engagement — Multiple Ways to Motivate & Sustain Interest

- Normalize that everyone is still learning how to communicate confidently — mistakes are part of growth.
- Emphasize that confidence is not about being loud, but about being respectful and clear.
- Invite students to reflect privately before sharing publicly.
- Offer choice in participation (discussion, acting, writing, drawing, small-group practice).
- Encourage students to set a simple intention, such as:
  - “Today I will speak up once.”
  - “Today I will use one ‘I’ statement.”
  - “Today I will invite someone else to share.”

### Representation — Multiple Ways to Understand the Skill

- Use clear comparisons to explain the difference between quiet, confident, and bossy communication.
- Model tone and body language physically so students can see and hear the difference.
- Provide visual sentence starters for “I” statements and respectful disagreement.
- Connect communication skills to real-life situations (recess, lunch, friendships).
- Reinforce the Calm → Speak → Solve framework visually during breathing practice.
- Use repetition of key phrases:
  - “Calm your body.”
  - “Speak respectfully.”
  - “Suggest a solution.”

### Action & Expression — Multiple Ways to Show Learning

- Allow students to respond through writing, discussion, movement, or role-play.
- Provide sentence starters such as:
  - “I feel...”
  - “I see it differently because...”
  - “Can we try...”
- Include structured practice through tone-switch exercises and disagreement scenarios.
- Allow students to practice inviting others into conversation during real group tasks.
- Encourage oral rehearsal before writing.
- Use breathing strategies as a physical demonstration of emotional regulation.
- Invite students to choose one confident communication skill to practice during the week.



# Lesson Plan: Your Voice Matters

Read the **Student Lesson** out loud. Ask students to share their ideas after reading the Reflection Question.

## Activity 1: Confident or Bossy?

- Read the directions to your students.
- Model one together before students begin.
- Emphasize tone and word choice.
- Optional: Have students act out original vs. revised version.

## Activity 2: Because Builder Challenge

- Read the directions to your students.
- Model one example first.
- Encourage complete sentences.
- Walk around and coach students who struggle to explain “why.”

## Activity 3: Think–Plan–Speak Organizer

- Read the directions to your students.
- Give students 3–5 minutes of quiet thinking time.
- Pair students after writing.
- Remind them to use reasoning words.

## Activity 4: Body Language Mirror

- Read the directions to your students.
- Model both versions dramatically.
- Keep it light and fun.
- Emphasize steady voice over loud voice.