



“Soft” Skills Integration

Activity Templates: Communication Skills

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STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing these activities students will...

1. Determine which type of communication is best suited to a situation.
2. Understand what qualities allow for effective communication.
3. Present short, impromptu speeches.

TIME REQUIRED: 20 to 30 minutes per activity, 3 activities included

RESOURCES: FFA.org

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. For activity #1: one copy of each of the five images, and a printout of the volunteer instructions cut into strips.
2. For activity #2: a printout of the scenario descriptions, cut into strips.
3. For activity #3: a printout of the impromptu topics, cut into strips.

SUGGESTED USE: *Incorporate any of these activities into the class curriculum before and during the following:*

1. Career units, especially during discussions about interviews
2. Public speaking units
3. Leadership units
4. Business visits and field trips
5. Collaborative or group projects

THESE ACTIVITIES ARE ALIGNED TO THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS:

FFA Precept

- CS-M. Communication: Effectively interact with others in personal and professional settings.

AFNR Cluster Skills

- CS.05. Describe career opportunities and means to achieve those opportunities in each of the Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources career pathways.

Common Core- Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 9-10 Language standards 1 and 3 here for specific expectations.)

Common Core- Language

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

AFNR Career Ready Practices

- CRP.02. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills. Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive.
- CRP.04. Communicate clearly, effectively, and with reason. Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal and/or visual methods.
- CRP.08. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. Career-ready individuals readily recognize problems in the workplace, understand the nature of the problem, and devise effective plans to solve the problem.
- CRP.12. Work productively in teams while using cultural/global competence. Career-ready individuals positively

contribute to every team, whether formal or informal.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Productivity and Accountability
- Social and Cross-cultural Skills

ACTIVITIES:

The ability to communicate effectively is an essential skill for success; it is also a skill that is consistently on an employer's top ten list of most desired skills. Communication skills are necessary in all agriculture classes, in FFA career development events and programs, in the workforce and in our personal lives. The development of these skills in students is essential to their future success.

➤ *Introduction/Icebreaker*

- a. Get students thinking about communication by playing "Simon Says." This will get students to see the importance of listening and how it is essential for effective communication. After the game is over discuss the importance of communication in all aspects of life. Have students share why "Simon Says" is a way to practice communication skills.
 - i. *Activity Variation:* Instead of playing a traditional game of "Simon Says" do a true/false style game where students have to raise their right hand if a statement is true and their left if the statement is false. Statements should be pulled from topics previously covered in class. For example if agricultural innovations is the current topic being covered some possible statements could be:
 1. John Deere invented the tractor. (False)
 2. Cyrus McCormick developed the reaper. (True)
 3. Norman Borlaug is known for creating the dwarf variety of oats. (False)

➤ *Activity Template #1: Different Types of Communication*

- a. This activity allows each student to discover the pros and cons of different types of communication and which components are needed for successful communication. *This activity is based on the "Communication Trial" activity in Leadership on the Go!*
- b. *Directions:*
 - i. Gather five different pictures. Pictures are provided below, but any variety of pictures would work.
 - ii. Give five student volunteers a different picture (assign pictures randomly) and tell them they are to communicate what the picture is to the class.
 - iii. Tell the rest of the class that each volunteer is going to communicate to you what their picture is in a different way.
 - iv. Encourage the class to take notice, make a list and draw what they see or hear—whatever it takes for them to remember what each picture is about.
 - v. Each student volunteer, using a different picture, will describe the pictures using the following types of communication:
 1. Volunteer one: Show the picture to the class for 15 seconds around the room and then hide it. The volunteer cannot speak or do anything else to convey the picture of the class.
 2. Volunteer two: Verbally describe the picture to the class. Do not show the picture to anyone else, and hand gestures cannot be used while describing the image.
 3. Volunteer three: On the board write words that describe the picture. Do not speak during this time, use hand gestures to add to the description, or show the picture to anyone.
 4. Volunteer four: Re-draw the picture on the board. Do not speak during this time, use hand gestures to add to the description, or show the original picture to anyone.
 5. Volunteer five: Act out what is happening in the picture without saying any words. Do not show the picture to anyone.
 6. These instructions are provided below in a format that can be printed and distributed to the volunteers.
 - vi. Give each volunteer (except volunteer number one) a specific time limit, for example 60 seconds, to describe their picture to the class.
- c. *Follow-up:*
 - i. Have the class describe what each picture look like based on how it was described to them. Show the students the actual image. What parts did they get right for each image and what did they get wrong?
 - ii. Discuss the pros and cons of each communication style in describing the picture. Have students share which form of communication they understood the best.
 - iii. Discuss how this activity can explain how people sometimes interpret the same event differently.
 - iv. Finish up by explaining how this activity shows that the most effective communicators use a variety

of communication methods.

➤ **Activity Template #2: Communication is Two-Way**

- a. Students are required to communicate only by asking questions. This activity illustrates that effective communication cannot be one way, but instead requires a give and take between people. *This activity is based on the "Questioning Skits" activity in Leadership on the Go!*
- b. **Directions:**
 - i. Divide into small groups of three to five people, depending on the size of the class.
 - ii. Each group will work together to perform an impromptu skit.
 - iii. Have each group come to the front of the room and choose one of the following scenarios (*provided below in a format that can be printed and distributed*):
 1. You are an FFA team right before a state career development event of your choosing.
 2. You are high schools students at a prom without a date.
 3. You are a group of students sent to the principal's office for being late to school.
 4. You are a group of students preparing for a canned food drive.
 5. You are a group of students about to attend your first FFA meeting.
 6. You are a group of students lost on the way to a football game.
 7. You are an FFA officer team about to meet the county commissioners and board of education members.
 8. *Variation:* Scenarios could also be created around current topics in class or an event soon approaching where students need to be excellent communicators.
 - iv. The task is for each group to act out what these scenarios sound like.
 - v. The students can only communicate using questions, and they must communicate with each other for one minute.
 - vi. When asking a question, each person must look at someone else in the group to signify who will speak next.
 - vii. When the minute is up the rest of the class must decide the scenario being acted out.
 - viii. Allow each group to perform their skit.
- c. **Follow-up:**
 - i. Have students share how they figured out the scenarios.
 - ii. Discuss the types of questions asked and the complexity of the questions asked during the skits.
 - iii. Discuss how carrying on a conversation using only questions is difficult. Have students share how guessing the scenario would have been easier if the group members could have answered each other.
 - iv. Discuss how this activity illustrates that effective communication has to be two-way.

➤ **Activity Template #3: Impromptu Speaking**

- a. Students explain as much as they know about a topic chosen from random. This activity will allow students to think on their feet in a comfortable situation, and provides practice in communicating their point in situation where they must think quickly. *This activity is based on the "Think on Your Feet" activity in Leadership on the Go!*
- b. **Directions:**
 - i. Cut the provided list of impromptu topics into strips.
 1. *Variation:* Develop a list of topics specific to your class or a situation the students will soon encounter. Topics should be simple and narrow and be something students should have some knowledge about.
 - ii. Place ideas into a container and have each student come to the front of the room to draw a topic.
 - iii. They will read their topic and have 15 seconds to brainstorm.
 - iv. One the 15 seconds is up they must give a two minute speech on the topic.
- c. **Follow-up:**
 - i. After all students have spoken discuss the positive and negative aspects of the student's speeches.
 - ii. Have students share what was difficult about the task, and what helped them get through it.
 - iii. Have students share when they might have to speak on a topic unexpectedly or respond to a question without much time to prepare.
 - iv. Discuss how they can improve their communication skills to make situations like this easier in the future.

Types of Communication: Volunteer Instructions

DIRECTIONS:

Cut the instructions into strips and give one to each volunteer.

Show the picture to the class **for 15 seconds only** around the room and then hide it. Do not speak or do anything else to convey the picture to the class.

Verbally describe the picture to the class. Do not show the picture to anyone else, and hand gestures cannot be used while describing the image.

On the board write words that describe the picture. Do not speak during this time, use hand gestures to add to the description nor show the picture to anyone.

Re-draw the picture on the board. Do not speak during this time, use hand gestures to add to the description nor show the original picture to anyone.

Act out what is happening in the picture without saying any words. Do not show the picture to anyone.

Types of Communication: Image 1



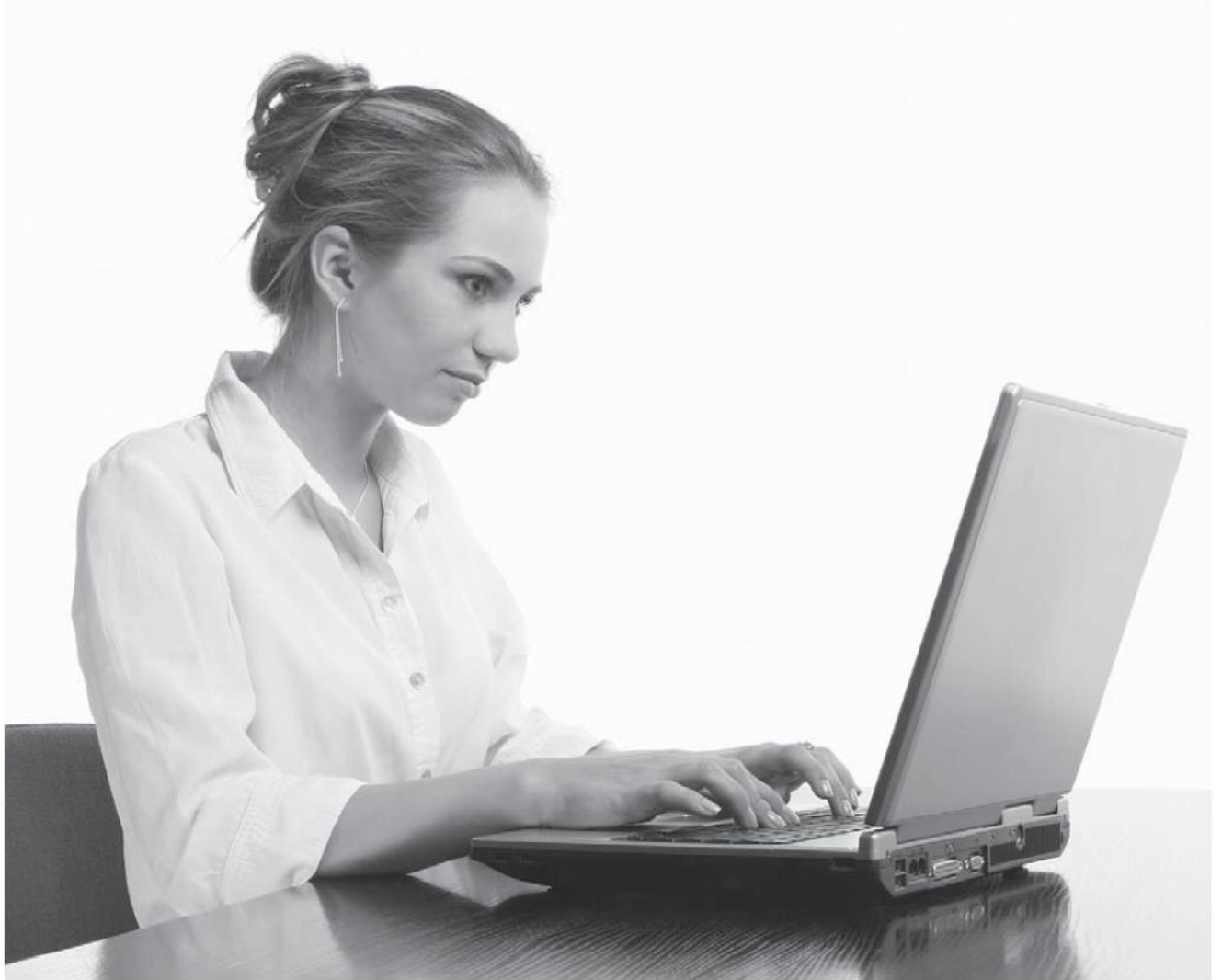
Types of Communication: Image 2



Types of Communication: Image 3



Types of Communication: Image 4



Types of Communication: Image 5



Communication is Two-Way: Scenarios

DIRECTIONS:

Cut the scenarios into strips and have each group choose one from the pile.

You are an FFA team right before a state career development event of your choosing.

You are high schools students at a prom without a date.

You are a group of students sent to the principal's office for being late to school.

You are a group of students preparing for a canned food drive.

You are a group of students about to attend your first FFA meeting.

You are a group of students lost on the way to a football game.

You are an FFA officer team about to meet the county commissioners and board of education members.

Impromptu Speaking: Topics

DIRECTIONS:

Cut the topics into strips and allow students to choose one.

Describe a time in your life when you were afraid.

Describe a time in your life when you were proud of an accomplishment.

Describe a time in your life when you had to plan an event. What were the steps?

Tell the group everything you know about changing a tire.

Tell the group about your family.

Describe a teacher or an event from elementary school.

Describe a time when you helped someone. What did you do? How did it make you feel?

Describe a sport or hobby you enjoy.

Tell the group about your favorite season and all the reasons it is your favorite.

Tell the group everything you know about making cheese.

Explain why agriculture is important.

Describe how your day has gone up to this point.

Describe your dream job: what steps do you need to achieve this job?

Tell the group what the back cover of a book about your life would say.

Tell the group everything you know about someone who has improved the agriculture industry in some way.