



High School

National FFA Organization

Lesson HS.88

USING KEY MESSAGES

Unit. Stage Three of Development—DO

Problem Area. How Do I Effectively Communicate with Others to Accomplish the Vision.

Precepts. **A2:** Focus on results. **A5:** Communicate effectively with others.

National Standards. NL-ENG.K-12.5 — Communication Strategies — Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.



Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will ...

- 1 Define the qualities of an effective key message.
- 2 Describe strategies used in developing a key message.
- 3 Develop key messages for a specific audience.



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Time. Instruction time for this lesson: 50 minutes.

Resources

National FFA Organization's Website: Key Messages.
www.ffa.org/about_ffa/organization/html/ffa.html

✓ Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Overhead projector and transparencies
- ✓ Copies of HS.88.AS.A—two per class
- ✓ Copies of HS.88.AS.B—two per class
- ✓ Copies of HS.88.AS.C—one per student
- ✓ Copies of HS.88.Assess—one per student
- ✓ HS.88.TM.A
- ✓ HS.88.TM.B

 **Key Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in bold *italics*:

▶ Key message



Interest Approach

Ask for two students to come to the front of the room for a role-play. Use HS.88.AS.A for the first role-play. One person will play the part of the high school principal; the other will be a student. The context of the role-play is that a student council member has set up a meeting with the principal to discuss starting a seatbelt safety program. The student will not be able to answer any of the principal's questions and will seem unprepared.

Conduct the role-play a second time using the same two students or two new volunteers. Use HS.88.AS.B for the second example; this time the student will sound polished and professional.



A very important meeting has been established between our high school principal, Mr./Mrs. (insert name of your principal) and a student council member. Who would like to help us out by playing the part of our principal and who will be our student council member?

Two students come forward.



(Insert name) will be playing the part of Mr./Mrs. (insert name of your principal), and (insert name) will be the student council member. For your information, our student council member has a vision of creating a school-wide seat belt safety program and has come to the principal's office to share his/her vision with the principal. Please speak clearly and loud enough for everyone in the room to hear you.



Provide HS.88.AS.A to both students.



Here's your dialogue for the role-play. Take a minute to review your lines.

While two volunteers quickly look over their lines, establish context for the rest of the class.



Your task will be to listen carefully to the dialogue. Evaluate how well our student council member does in persuading the principal that the idea is a good one. Feel free to jot down any strengths or weaknesses you observe.

When finished with the first role-play, use the same two students or get two new volunteers and repeat for HS.88.AS.B. Show appreciation to the volunteers by giving them a "Virtual High-Five."

On the count of three, all students in the room act like they are giving them a high-five.



Let's show our appreciation to our volunteers, (use names), by giving them a virtual high-five on three. One, two, three.

*Following both role-plays, process the experience with the following questions. Use a **Me-you-us Momen** to create student discussion.*



What weaknesses did you notice from our student council member in the first example?

Using only one word, how would you describe the student council member in the first example? Why?

What improvements did you observe in the second role-play?

Using only one word, how would you describe the student council member in the second role-play? Why?

Introduce the big-picture goal of today's lesson with a Karaoke Moment. Place the following "lyrics" on the writing surface.

Key messages are the key

To sharing our vision for all to see.

Clear, concise, and powerful,

Our communication is not dull.



This next activity will introduce us to the goal of today's lesson. It will also allow us to laugh, get a little silly, and have fun before getting focused for some important learning. As you can see, there are some lyrics in the front of the room. You may not have realized it, but you are all music stars.

Divide into small groups of four to five students, and give each group a different musical style such as country, rap, opera, heavy metal, blues, love songs, or gospel. Give three to five minutes to practice their performance, and then have each group give a quick rendition of their style.



Using the style you've been assigned, create a song using the lyrics you see in the front of the room. You have four minutes to prepare for your grand performance. Good luck and have fun rehearsing!



SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. Define the qualities of an effective key message.

Using HS.88.TM.A, ask students to write the following in their note books:

Our wonderful songs focused on the idea of a key message. Let’s take a look at what a key message is

I. Key Message: clear, concise, and powerful statement that influences others by effectively communicating a desired message.

Ask students to think back to the second role-play.

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Ask students to think back to the second role-play.

In the second role-play, the principal complimented the student council member for communicating in three ways. How many of you can remember what the principal said?

Write the letters C, C, and P on the writing surface. Ask students if this helps them to remember.

? Excellent key messages have three characteristics. These are the letters you will need to remember. If we look at the definition of Key messages, we see what C, C, and P represent.

Give the rest of the notes from HS.88.TM.A.

A. Clear—Is the message easily understood?

1. Could include facts, statistics, and examples.

2. Should avoid jargon.

B. Concise—Is the message short and to the point?

1. Less than three sentences.

C. Powerful—Will people remember the message?

1. Use vivid language that appeals to people’s emotions.

Use a Show What You Know Moment to quickly review the previous notes. Ask students to close their notes and quickly answer the following questions on a blank piece of paper:

What three characteristics do effective key messages have in common.

How can you make a key message more clear.



Key messages should be less than how many sentences.

To make your message memorable, you can appeal to people's what.

Answers to mini-quiz:

Clear, concise, powerful

Use facts, statistics, and examples; avoid jargon

Three

Emotions

Transition into objective two.



Now that we know what makes an effective key message, let's take a look at four questions to ask ourselves when developing and using key messages.

Objective 2. Describe strategies used in developing a key message.

Use HS.88.TM.B to facilitate the note taking. Cover up most of the transparency, uncover each section as you discuss it.

II. Developing a Key Message

A. What is the overall message or vision to communicate?

Relate this to the role-plays at the beginning of class. Ask the class:

What was the overall vision our student council member was trying to communicate in the role-play?

Possible responses might be: to start a seatbelt safety program; to increase use of seatbelts among high school students.

B. Who is the audience?

1. Know their demographics, needs, interests, and attitudes.

Refer to the role-play.

Who was the audience?

Possible responses might be: an adult; professional educator; also a parent; someone who cares about kids.

C. What motivates or influences this audience?

Refer to the role-play.





What would motivate or influence a principal?

Possible responses include: how the program could increase the safety of students; statistics about teenage use of seatbelts; how the program would be organized and managed.

D. What clear, concise, and powerful key message(s) would work best?

Refer to the role-play.



What Key messages were used in the role-play?

You may need to read some of the key messages from the role-play to refresh the students' memories. Possible responses include: number of deaths due to not using seat belts; teenage males are least likely to use seat belts; the number of lives that are saved by seat belts.

Review the four steps to developing key messages by having students work in pairs to rewrite the four questions into statements that end with a period. Examples of this are:

A. Establish an overall message or vision.

B. Identify the audience.

C. Brainstorm what motivates the audience.

D. Select one or more key messages that are clear, concise, and powerful.

You could give them the first word of each step—establish, identify, brainstorm, and select—to get them started if they have trouble.



Let's test our English skills now by turning these four steps that are stated as questions into statements that end with a period. Rewrite the four steps so they are not questions. For example what is the overall message or vision to communicate? Could be turned into Select a message or vision you want to communicate. What questions are there? You may work with a partner. You have three minutes to do this. Go.

Have several pairs share what they wrote.

Objective 3. Develop key messages for a specific audience.

III. Developing key messages for a specific audience.

Give each student a copy of HS.88.AS.C. This activity asks students to create a National Association, of which they are the communications directors. The activity sheet instructs them to develop key messages that could be used by people affiliated with their association.



Now that we know the qualities of Key messages and strategies in developing them we're going to practice developing Key messages. Earlier in today's lesson, I asked you to be music stars. Now we've assumed a new identity. We are now high-paid, well-spoken communications directors of National Associations. Our challenge is to create Key messages that inform the public about our associations. The cool thing is ... you get to invent the association that you represent.

Encourage students to invent an Association that would meet their interests such as:



*National Association of Skateboarders
National Cheerleading Association
Federal Association of Thespians
National High School Football Association
National Association for Internet Junkies*

Students could work independently or collaboratively. Remind them that all key messages should be CCP—clear, concise, and powerful.



Use the activity sheet to identify your association and at least five Key messages. To help you understand the assignment, an example of the National FFA Organization's Key messages is on the sheet. When you are finished, double check to make sure that all of your messages are CCP. What do those three letters mean again?

Students respond with “clear, concise, and powerful.”

Allow 10 minutes to complete. Give them 5 minutes notice and tell them they should have 2-3 Key messages done. Great effort! Let's see what organizations and Key messages you created. Please pair up with someone across the room and share what you wrote.

Allow one minute for sharing.

Please shake your partner's hand and have a seat.



Review/Summary

Have students verbally review with a peer.



Think of three things you learned today that you didn't know before walking in the door and a time that using a key message would come in handy. Turn to a neighbor and share.

Show appreciation to your partner.

Let that person know you appreciate them by looking them in the eye and telling them, “Wow, you're a genius!”

End with a repeat performance of the Karaoke Moment from the beginning of class. It might be fun to have all the groups perform at the same time to end the class with laughter and excitement.

Note: If you plan to use the lesson, conducting a One-on-One Visit, inform students that it will build upon what was learned today.

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Application

►Extended Classroom Activity:

Conduct mock television news interviews where students have to use the key messages developed in HS.88.AS.C. Students could work in pairs, where one person serves as the news reporter and the other as the communications director for their selected association. Videotape these and then ask the students to critique them.



FFA Activity:

Ask the officers and committee chairs to develop key messages for every committee of the Program of Activities.

SAE Activity: Have students develop Key messages that pertain to their SAE. For example, students with livestock SAEs could work collaboratively to create messages promoting raising animals for an SAE.

Connections to Other Lessons:

HS.17.Lesson: How Leaders Influence Others Through Vision

HS.50.Lesson: Communicating With Customers

HS.84.Lesson: The Need for Communication to Influence Others

HS.89.Lesson: Conducting a One-on-One Visit

Evaluation

Use HS.88.Assess to evaluate student mastery of content.

Answers to Assessment:

Part One: Short Answer

1. powerful
2. clear
3. concise

Part Two: True or False

4. False
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. True



USING KEY MESSAGES

►Part One: Short Answer

Instructions: Write the correct characteristic of an effective key message.

- _____ 1. Will people remember the message.
- _____ 2. Is the message easily understood.
- _____ 3. Is the message short and to the point.

►Part Two: True or False

Instructions: Write the word “true” or “false”.

- _____ 4. Key messages are usually a paragraph in length.
- _____ 5. To increase the understanding of the message, avoid jargon.
- _____ 6. Facts and statistics should not be used when developing key messages.
- _____ 7. The first step to developing key messages is to identify the audience.
- _____ 8. When thinking about your audience, consider their attitudes, interests, and needs.



KEY MESSAGE

Key Message—clear, concise, and powerful statement that influences others by effectively communicating a desired message

◆ **Clear—Is the message easily understood.**

- ➔ Could include facts, statistics, and examples
- ➔ Avoid jargon

◆ **Concise—Is the message short and to the point.**

- ➔ Less than three sentences

◆ **Powerful—Will people remember the message.**

- ➔ Use vivid language that appeals to people's emotions



DEVELOPING A KEY MESSAGE

- ◆ **What is the overall message or vision to communicate.**
- ◆ **Who is the audience.**
 - ➔ Know their demographics, needs, interests, and attitudes
- ◆ **What motivates or influences this audience.**
- ◆ **What clear, concise, and powerful key message(s) would work best.**

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ROLE-PLAY #1

Student: Hello, and thanks for meeting with me.

Principal: Hey, no problem. I understand from the student council advisor that you have a neat idea that you wanted to share with me.

Student: That's right. I think we should have a seat belt safety program.

Principal: That's great. Tell me more about your idea.

Student: Well, I just think it's a good idea and would be a cool thing to do.

Principal: Why is it a good idea.

Student: I don't know ... I guess because saving lives is good thing to do, and a lot of my friends are beginning to drive.

Principal: What are your ideas for starting the program.

Student: Well, I'm not sure. I haven't really thought about that, yet.

Principal: Tell you what, come back when you have a clearer picture of what it is you hope to accomplish and some objectives for the program, and we'll talk some more.

Student: Thanks for meeting with me today.



ROLE-PLAY #2

Student: Hello, and thanks for meeting with me.

Principal: Hey, no problem. I understand from the student council advisor that you have a neat idea that you wanted to share with me.

Student: That's right. I'm concerned with the number of my friends who are beginning to drive, but don't understand the value of wearing their seat belt. It's my vision to influence more than 90 percent of the student body to buckle up every time they get in a car.

Principal: You're right. I see it every day as students arrive and leave school.

Student: I believe that our student council needs to communicate to the student body how important it is to buckle up. I've done some research already, and found that every hour someone in America dies, simply because they didn't buckle up. In fact, failing to buckle up contributes to more fatalities than any other single traffic safety-related behavior. Increasing seat belt use is the single most effective thing that we can do to save lives and reduce injuries on America's roadways.

Principal: I'm especially concerned about our high school students.

Student: I am as well. Research has shown that males, ages 16 to 25, are least likely to buckle up. My age group simply doesn't believe they will be injured or killed. Yet, we are the nation's highest-risk drivers, with more drunk driving, more speeding, and more crashes. The good news is that seat belts save an estimated 9,500 lives each year. If 90 per cent of all Americans would buckle up, more than 5,500 deaths and 132,000 injuries could be prevented each year.

Principal: What are your ideas for starting the program.

Student: I have worked with the student council officers to form a committee that would create some objectives and goals for the program. We are meeting next week to brainstorm some ideas.

Principal: Tell you what, let me know when you have that meeting, and I'd love to participate. You're doing great work, and I have to tell you, I'm impressed with your ability to communicate clearly, and in a concise and powerful manner.

Student: Thank you, and I appreciate you listening to my ideas. Have a good day!



USING KEY MESSAGES

►Directions:

You were recently hired as the communications director for a national association. Your job is to create a communications plan that includes key messages that could be used by you, fellow employees, and association members in communicating the purpose of the association. Create an association that matches your interests or hobbies, and develop at least five key messages. To help you understand the assignment, use the example from the National FFA Organization given below.

Name:

National FFA Organization

Key Messages:

More than 12,000 teachers in more than 7,300 FFA chapters are delivering an innovative, cutting-edge, and integrated curriculum to more than 460,000 students.

FFA prepares students for more than 300 careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture.

Members conduct hands-on work experiences called SAEs ranging from food science to ag communications to wildlife management to production agriculture.

FFA chapters are not just in rural areas. They can be found in 10 of the nation's 15 largest cities including New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

Agriculture is the nation's largest employer, with more than 22 million people working in some phase of the industry.

Now it's your turn!

Name of your association:

Key Messages:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

