

Thinking With My Friends and Family

Video: The Active Listening Scavenger Hunt Part 2

As Zachary read the local online newspaper after school, he noticed an advertisement for a summer job working as a cartoon character at a famous amusement park near his hometown. The advertisement read, “Applicants must possess strong non-verbal skills and the ability to display positive body language.” The job description was intriguing to Zachary; however, before he applied for the position, Zachary realized he was going to have to practice in order to develop all of his non-verbal skills.

Now it’s your turn to respond **VERBALLY** and **NON-VERBALLY**. Try one, or more, of the following strategies to improve your ability as a speaker and listener:

Responding Verbally

1. Ask a friend or family member to play the game, “**And Then...**” To start, one person will make a statement that ends with “and then.” Next, the other person will pick up where the statement left off and add an ending to the sentence. For example, (First person) “The family went to the park and then...” (Second person) “They flew kites together.” Switch back and forth between each role in order to start and end the sentences.
2. Practice having a conversation with a family member or friend. Begin by explaining to this person your plans for the weekend, summer, or the future. As you talk, really work on explaining your ideas with specific details and imagery. Encourage your partner to ask you questions in order to make you listen carefully and give the appropriate answers.
3. Join with a family member or friend and play the game, “**Listen Up.**” To play this game, sit back-to-back with your partner. Have your partner draw an arrangement of different geometric shapes and symbols on a piece of paper. Next, have your partner verbally describe the picture they drew to you. Without looking at the drawing, listen carefully and attempt to draw the same picture. Finally, compare pictures as you discuss the “Speaker/Listener Communication Cycle” and the “Active Listening Process.”

Responding Non-Verbally

1. Invite a family member or friend to have a 5-minute conversation with you. During this talk, have your partner describe their favorite vacation. However, they need to think about using proper volume, pacing, and tone of voice. While the person is telling their vacation story, you should listen carefully and observe the speaker’s non-verbal communication (facial expressions, body posture, and hand gestures). After the person is done telling their story, you report back the main points of the vacation, and what you noticed in terms of non-verbal use. Finally, switch positions and concentrate on both your verbal and non-verbal communication skills as you tell about one of your favorite vacation experiences.

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2. Join your whole family together and play the game, “**Body Language Charades.**” This is a form of charades that helps teach about observing with your eyes and listening with your ears to get the complete message. To play, have one person stand up and display a certain type of emotion (happy, sad, confused, mad, tired, embarrassed, etc.) However, make sure the person does not say any words while they “act” out the emotion. The rest of the players will attempt to “read” the emotion.
3. Invite a family member or friend to go with you to a local mall, restaurant, or coffee shop. While you are there, observe people having conversations. What does their body language and facial expressions say about them? Be aware of your own non-verbal messages when you are listening.