



MAKING AGREEMENTS 3. GOOD COMMUNICATION

Good communication helps you express ideas and feelings, as well as understand the emotions and thoughts of others. It does not only make the process of sharing information easier but it also helps people develop relationships with others. If you want to foster understanding among your classmates, it is important to have good communication skills. That means listening attentively to others, asking questions to avoid misunderstandings, being humble enough to acknowledge your mistakes, and having a positive perspective so you can focus mainly on what is good. If you try to put these skills into practice the next time you are having trouble reaching an agreement or during teamwork, communication won't be an issue.

Materials
• Printed handout
• Pen or pencil

STEP BY STEP

- A** If possible, print the handout on the next pages so you can work on it.
- B** In small groups, look at the picture of the boy talking to a girl in the handout and read the numbered statements next to them. Write in the blanks the numbers that you think correspond either to the person who is talking or to the person who is listening. Then compare your answers with another group and discuss them.
- C** Now, look at the photo and read the questions. In groups, discuss and answer the questions. Make sure all of you share your opinions.
- D** Read the text and the table describing the Four Player Model. Based on the experience you had in Step C, answer the questions in the third column of the table. Discuss with your group how this model can help you understand the dynamics and interactions within a group and ultimately lead to effective communication. Then think of other communication skills you can use for collaboration at school.
- E** Discuss in small groups. Write your conclusions.

1 What are the benefits of being a good communicator?

2 Are listening skills also important? Why?

3 Do you think communication is one of the basic skills of teamwork? Why?

IT

If you want to learn more about effective communication, go to: <http://www.edutics.mx/5AY>



MAKING AGREEMENTS
3. GOOD COMMUNICATION



- 1 Send a clear message.
- 2 Use an appropriate tone of voice.
- 3 Be receptive.
- 4 Make sure you are understood.
- 5 Give feedback.
- 6 Maintain eye contact.
- 7 Be direct and honest.
- 8 Show you are paying attention.
- 9 Don't interrupt to express your ideas.
- 10 Ask questions to make everything clear.

1 What is wrong with this situation?

2 What would you do about it?



MAKING AGREEMENTS
3. GOOD COMMUNICATION

Four Player Model

Created by David Kantor, this model maintains that in all interactions between people there are only four possible speech acts. Many communication problems occur when individuals use only one or two acts, decreasing group learning and effective interaction.

Role	Function	Who played this role on your team? Why?
Movers	They propose or introduce an idea or a concept and move the team forward.	
Followers	They support the ideas proposed by movers.	
Opponents	They listen to different perspectives and provide critical feedback.	
Bystanders	They observe the team and its processes from a distance, challenging the proposed ideas or offering suggestions to improve those ideas.	





MAKING AGREEMENTS

4. RESPONSIBILITY

Becoming a responsible person means being able to make decisions with full knowledge and seeking to meet both personal and collective goals. Acting responsibly has a lot to do with thinking of others and, most importantly, accepting the consequences of your actions and decisions. Responsibility has benefits because, over time, you will be able to earn greater independence and develop important life lessons that will help you throughout your adult life. Responsibility can also help you be more honest and reliable. Isn't that great?

Materials
• Printed handout
• Pen or pencil

STEP BY STEP

- A** If possible, print the handout on the next pages or copy it in your notebook so you can work on it. In pairs, read the initial note and text from the handout. Together, think of different moments when a school project was negatively affected by lack of responsibility from a team member or from you. The main point here is that you should be as honest as possible when talking about the incidents.
- B** Then read the situation presented in the handout and discuss your thoughts with your partner. Now, read the questions and reflect on them. Answer them individually and then discuss your answers with your partner.
- C** Look at the pennants with your partner and write a number to show the order of the steps from one to six. Then compare your answers with another pair and discuss why you chose that order. Finally, think of different ways you can improve collaborative work to reach better results.
- D** Discuss in small groups. Write your conclusions.

1 What is the importance of making commitments and assuming responsibilities?

2 Is it better to look more for what brings us together than for what separates us? Why?

3 What could happen if someone in the team does not fulfill his or her responsibilities?

IT

If you want to learn more about being responsible at school, go to: <http://edutics.mx/5Ph>



MAKING AGREEMENTS
4. RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility implies acting consciously about what you do or don't do. Responsibility in collaborative work requires care (self-care and care for others) instead of trying to achieve personal goals over collective ones. Responsibility, organization, and commitment are vital for the achievement of common objectives at school and in everyday life.

Situation

Your history teacher asked your class to work in groups to create a very important presentation that counts as your final exam for the semester. If your team fails, you won't pass the subject.

Your team has been doing a great job with you as the team leader. You divided the work fairly so everyone was in charge of a specific task to create an excellent presentation. You cared about every member of the group and encouraged everyone to share their ideas. You promoted respect for the group members

and, when conflicts arose, you were always there to help solve them.

After two weeks of hard work, you finished the presentation. Since you showed a great sense of responsibility, everyone decided that you should keep the USB flash drive where the work was saved and take it to class the next day.

Finally, the day has come, but just a few minutes before making the presentation, you realize that you didn't bring the USB flash drive...

1 How would you feel when you realized you didn't bring the USB flash drive?

2 What would you do?

3 Would you take full responsibility for not bringing it, or would you make an excuse for your mistake?

4 What can you do to help your team not fail the subject because of your mistake?



MAKING AGREEMENTS

4. RESPONSIBILITY

Create an action plan

Define goals

Reach an agreement

Distribute tasks

Fulfill responsibilities

Make a commitment

1

2

3

4

5

6



OBJECTIVITY

1. FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION

Being aware of how to deal with the negative emotions in a conflict can help you have a wider and more objective perspective. Focused meditation is a great tool you can use to regulate your emotions, reduce stress, and unblock communication in your everyday life. This type of meditation allows you to change the focus of attention so you can calm down and find solutions. If you practice it in the morning before going to school or at night before going to bed, you will soon notice positive changes in your relationships and daily activities.

Materials
• Printed handout
• Pen or pencil

STEP BY STEP

- A** If possible, print the handout on the next page or copy it in your notebook so you can work on it.
- B** In pairs, read why attention techniques are useful to us and discuss with your partner different aspects of your life that may benefit from practicing these techniques. Then prepare yourself to have a meditation practice.
- C** Your teacher will read the instructions to perform a meditation practice known as mindful breathing. Follow the directions and enjoy the experience.
- D** In groups, share your personal experiences regarding this exercise. Then read and answer the questions. Discuss with your classmates different aspects of your life that may benefit from practicing mindful breathing regularly.
- E** Discuss in groups. Write your conclusions.



1 Do you think we are able to think straight when we're angry? Do you think this exercise will help you soothe your anger?

2 What differences did you notice in your mental and physical states before and after practicing mindful breathing?

3 How do you think this technique could be helpful in resolving conflicts between peers?

IT

If you want to read more about focused meditation, go to: <http://www.edutics.mx/5dT>



OBJECTIVITY

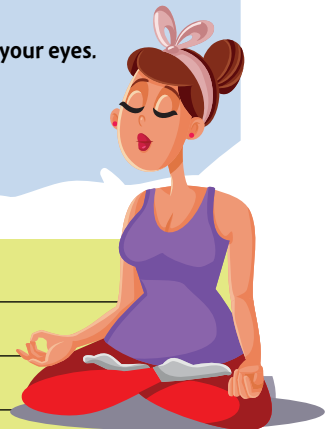
1. FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION

Attention techniques allow us to be aware of what is happening to us, so we can evaluate our behavior and attitudes to see if our feelings are out of control and negatively affecting our intentions and abilities. They help us work with strong emotions so that, in the heat of the moment, we don't make a conflict worse. Mindfulness can help us learn to detach from or let go of our usual state of mind so we can better evaluate our responses to situations.



Mindful Breathing

- 1 Sit comfortably, close your eyes, loosen your shoulders, and start to breathe deeply from your stomach.
- 2 Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, letting your breath flow effortlessly in and out of your body as it fills you with life. Notice how your body is expanding each time you breathe in, and feel how your body relaxes when you breathe out.
- 3 Focus on the sound of your breathing, but don't think about it; just experience it. Notice your breathing (if it is deep or shallow, quick or slow).
- 4 Observe the breath in your body, and notice how your body feels.
- 5 Place your hand gently on your stomach, and notice the sensation of swaying.
- 6 Let your mind stay quiet and clear. You don't have to do anything but let your thoughts flow freely. Let them rise and fall of their own accord and be at one with your breath.
- 7 Now, notice the sounds around you. First, the ones near you, in the classroom. Then, slowly shift your attention to the sounds outside the classroom. And then to the sounds in the street. Listen without judging.
- 8 With each breath, every part of your body is relaxing.
- 9 Now, feel the warmth of your skin. Little by little, return to your regular breathing. Notice if it is slower than when you began the exercise.
- 10 Start moving your toes and fingers, your head, your shoulders, your feet.
- 11 When you are ready, gently open your eyes.



1 How do you feel after practicing mindful breathing?

Describe your thoughts and sensations.

2 Did your mind drift away when doing the exercise? Why?

3 How could this exercise be useful in other aspects of your life?



OBJECTIVITY

2. ARE YOU A GOOD LISTENER?

This activity will help you learn the importance of listening to understand instead of to reply. That means really paying attention to what the other person is saying, instead of thinking about what you want to say in response. This is the first step in good communication. Once you start listening with the real purpose of understanding, you will be able to have a meaningful interaction with classmates, teachers, parents, siblings, and everyone else in your life.

Materials

- Printed handout
- Pen or pencil

STEP BY STEP

- A** If possible, print the handout on the next pages or copy it in your notebook so you can work on it.
- B** In pairs, read the definition of *active listening* in the handout. Then choose five options from the box that you think might correspond to how each couple is listening and write them inside the thought bubble. Compare your answers with another pair and discuss what problems might come up if we don't pay proper attention when listening.
- C** Read the tips for active listening. Then take turns to ask each other the questions in the handout. Don't write down the answers: practice the tips you read.
- D** Now, using the information your partner gave you, fill in the blanks in the diagram. Once you finish, confirm the information with your partner. Discuss and answer the last question. Give each other some tips to develop better listening skills.
- E** Discuss in groups. Write your conclusions.



1 Why do you think it is important to listen to understand?

2 Can you connect with another person if you don't listen to him or her? Why?

3 How is active listening a useful tool for collaborative work?

IT

If you want to know more about active listening, go to: <http://www.edutics.mx/5dc>



OBJECTIVITY
2. ARE YOU A GOOD LISTENER?

Active listening means to fully concentrate on what someone is saying, instead of just passively hearing their message.

Remember Ignore distractions Show impatience Interrupt
Become defensive Repeat Ask questions Confirm understanding
Make judgements Jump to conclusions



Tips for Active Listening

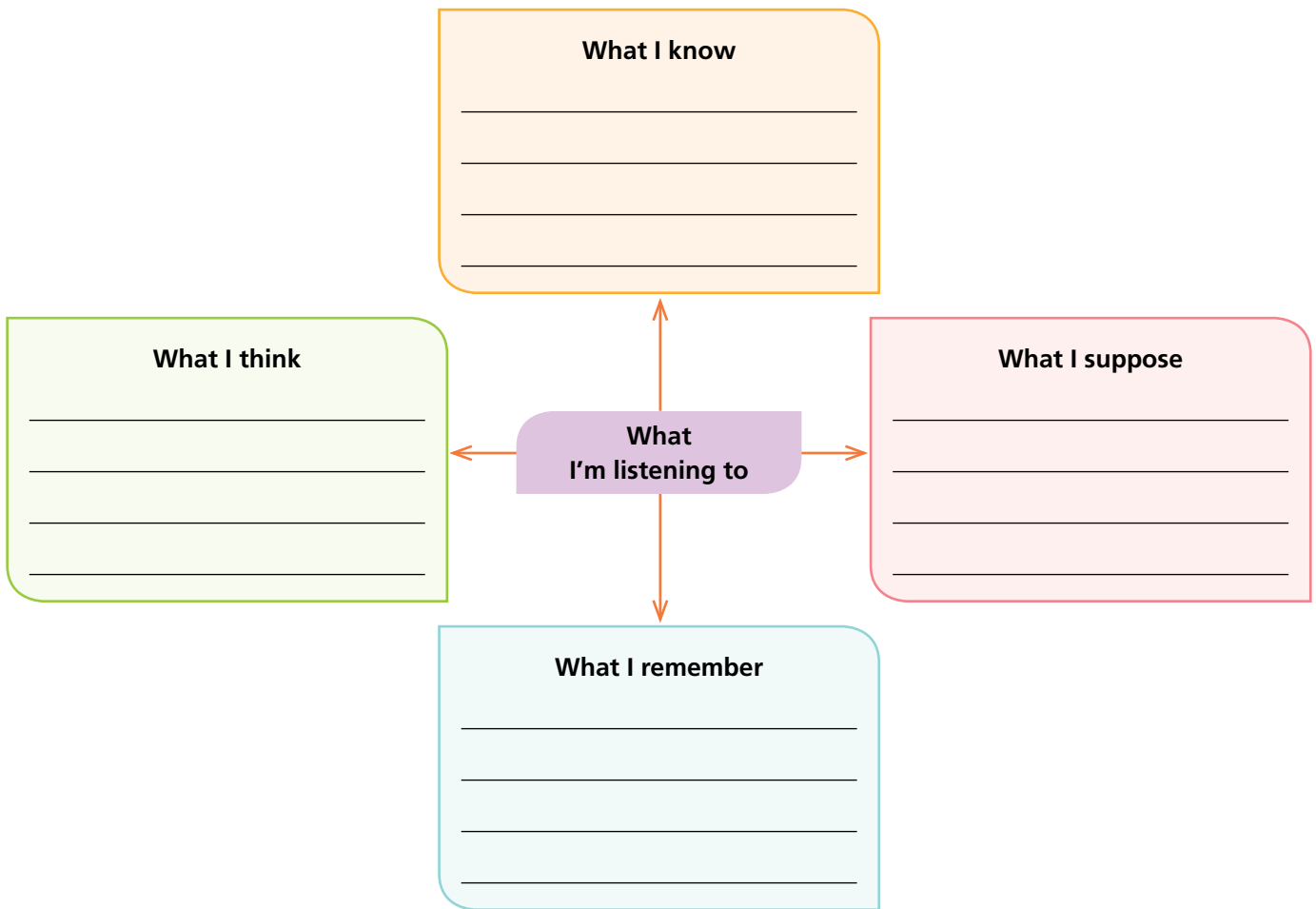
- **Receive:** pay attention to what the other person says, what he or she does not say, and how it is said. Avoid any distraction.
- **Appreciate:** this assures the other person that you're paying attention to what he or she says. You could repeat the last-mentioned words, nod, or use some interjections like Oh, or *Umm-hmm*, or Really?
- **Summarize:** paraphrase the message in your own words to confirm with the other person that what he or she said and what we heard are the same.
- **Ask:** this helps us clear up any doubts between speaker and listener, ensuring a complete understanding of the message.



OBJECTIVITY

2. ARE YOU A GOOD LISTENER?

- 1 How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- 2 What's your mother's name?
- 3 What are your favorite subjects?
- 4 Please, describe an interesting event in your childhood.
- 5 What major do you want to study? Why?



Do your answers match what your partner said to you? Why? Why not?
