

## Different Listener, Different Words

**Directions** To communicate effectively, you need to choose the right words. Your words should be meaningful to the listener and appropriate for the occasion. Read the diary entries below and write messages for the occasions described, using separate paper.

### From Austin's Diary

“This place is such a mess I will feel totally humiliated when our visitors show up. If certain lazybones do not get up off the chair and help me transform this chaos, I will get so mad I might scream.”

1. Write a suitable school announcement to express Austin's concerns before a school open house.
2. What might Austin say informally to a classmate to express his concerns before the open house?
3. What might Austin say to his five-year-old brother before the arrival of out-of-town house guests?

### From Jennifer's Diary

“Aunt Elsa just called to say she has bronchitis, so we can not vacation with her in the mountains after all. I'm so disappointed. We have all been looking forward to this. Mom and Dad are out on errands. I have got to go—taking little sis to park.”

4. What note might Jennifer leave for her parents to explain the change of plans?
5. What might Jennifer say to her four-year-old sister to explain the change of plans?
6. Write a suitable note for Jennifer to write on a card to Aunt Elsa.

# Body Language

**Directions** People communicate with more than just words. Communication through facial expression, posture, gestures, and way of moving is called body language. Body language also involves eye contact and physical distance during a conversation. Complete this chart by explaining briefly what each example of body language communicates to you. Then answer the questions that follow.

When people do this:		They communicate this:
1	Smile	
2	Nod	
3	Wink	
4	Yawn	
5	Frown	
6	Slouch	
7	Roll their eyes	
8	Stand very close	
9	Stare at the floor	
10	Avoid eye contact	
11	Walk with a bounce	
12	Raise their eyebrows	
13	Shrug their shoulders	
14	Cross arms across the chest	

1. Describe one real-life example of body language you have seen recently and what it meant to you.

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2. Describe one real-life example of a mixed message—a time when someone’s words and body language sent different messages.

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## Communication Technology

**Directions** Read the following information about communication technology. Then keep the principles in mind as you answer the questions on the next page.

### Taking Precautions with Technology

Modern technology gives people many ways to communicate. The telephone, of course, has been around for a long time. Today, people also use cell phones, voicemail, email, electronic bulletin boards, chat rooms, and instant messaging. Although communication technology can be convenient, it also carries risks. When you use technology to communicate, remember these cautions:

- **Missing Body Language** The person at the other end of a communication can not see your body language. Unless you are using the telephone, your tone of voice is not heard either. Choose your words carefully because they often give the only clue as to whether you are angry, worried, or joking. You also can not see body language. If a friend is hurt by a misinterpreted message, you can not see the hurt facial expression. You may miss the chance to correct the misunderstanding right away.
- **Sensitive Messages** The more sensitive or emotional the content, the more important it is to communicate it in person. Face-to-face is best for a sensitive message. Telephone is second best because at least tone of voice accompanies the words.
- **In Person** Never use communication technology to avoid talking with someone directly. If you are not willing to say something in person, you should probably not say it at all.
- **Oops!** Other people can accidentally see or hear a recorded or computer message. Email messages are forwarded very easily, sometimes by mistake. Words you intended to be private may get forwarded to others. Making messages brief and factual can save embarrassment.
- **Too Personal** People you know only over the computer may not be who they say they are. Be very cautious about electronic communication with people you do not know personally. Never give personal information, such as your full name, home address, or telephone number.
- **Courtesy and Care** Use a cell phone with courtesy and care. Cell phones can be very distracting. Unexpected ringing at inappropriate times may disturb others. You may be distracted if you talk on the cell phone while also doing something else. Neither activity gets your full attention.

(Continued on next page)

**Communication Technology (Continued)**

**Activity 22**

1. **Embarrassment** Cheri tried phoning her friend, Darlene. When nobody answered, Cheri left this message on the answering machine: “Hi, Darlene. This is Cheri. You know that good-looking new boy at school you asked me about? His name is Ed and I found out all sorts of stuff about him. Give me a call.” When Darlene and her family arrived home, they all listened to the answering machine messages together. Darlene’s brother has been teasing her about Ed ever since, and Darlene blames Cheri. *How could Cheri have handled this situation differently for a better result?*

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2. **Inappropriate Words** Trace was not happy with the grade he got on an essay he wrote. He emailed some negative, threatening comments about the teacher to a friend, who accidentally forwarded the message to a list of recipients. Word got back to the school, and Trace is now in trouble. *How should Trace have handled this situation differently for a better result?*

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3. **Cell Phone Dinner** Paul and Ellie went out to dinner together. Paul’s cell phone rang just as the food was served. He spent half the meal talking on the phone. When he hung up, Ellie made it clear she was unhappy. He said, “I left Dan a message. How could I know he would pick such a bad time to call back?” *How could Paul have handled this situation differently for a better result?*

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4. **Too Curt** When Maida phoned to invite Theresa to a party, Theresa said, “I will have to check. I will let you know.” Theresa found out that her family had an out-of-town commitment that weekend. She emailed Maida, “Sorry. Can not make it. Thanks anyway.” The next time Maida had a party, she did not invite Theresa. *How could Theresa have handled this situation differently for a better result?*

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## Active Listening

**Directions** Read the information on active listening. Then with a classmate, role-play two conversations. In one, the speaker begins by saying, “I did not make the team.” The listener uses active listening. Switch roles. This time the speaker begins, “I can not believe I’m in trouble for being late again.” After the conversations, evaluate your active listening by filling in the chart. Explain what you did well or need to improve.

### What Is Active Listening?

Good listening is much more than just sitting still while another person talks. Active listening is a structured way to understand what someone is saying and feeling and to let the other person know you understand.

**Active listening is...**

- Focusing on the speaker
- Paying close attention
- Watching body language
- Repeating in your own words
- Asking clarifying questions
- Noticing emotions
- Checking your understanding
- Showing empathy

**Active listening is not...**

- Planning your reply
- Thinking about something unrelated
- Arguing or debating
- Interrupting
- Giving advice unless asked
- Solving the other person’s problems
- Making assumptions
- Agreeing with everything said

Active Listening Responses	Yes	No	Explanation
Gave verbal feedback, such as yes or no			
Gave nonverbal feedback, such as nodding			
Checked for correct understanding			
Paid attention to speaker’s body language and emotions			
Listened to speaker rather than planning responses			
Understood speaker’s feelings			
Showed empathy regardless of opinion			