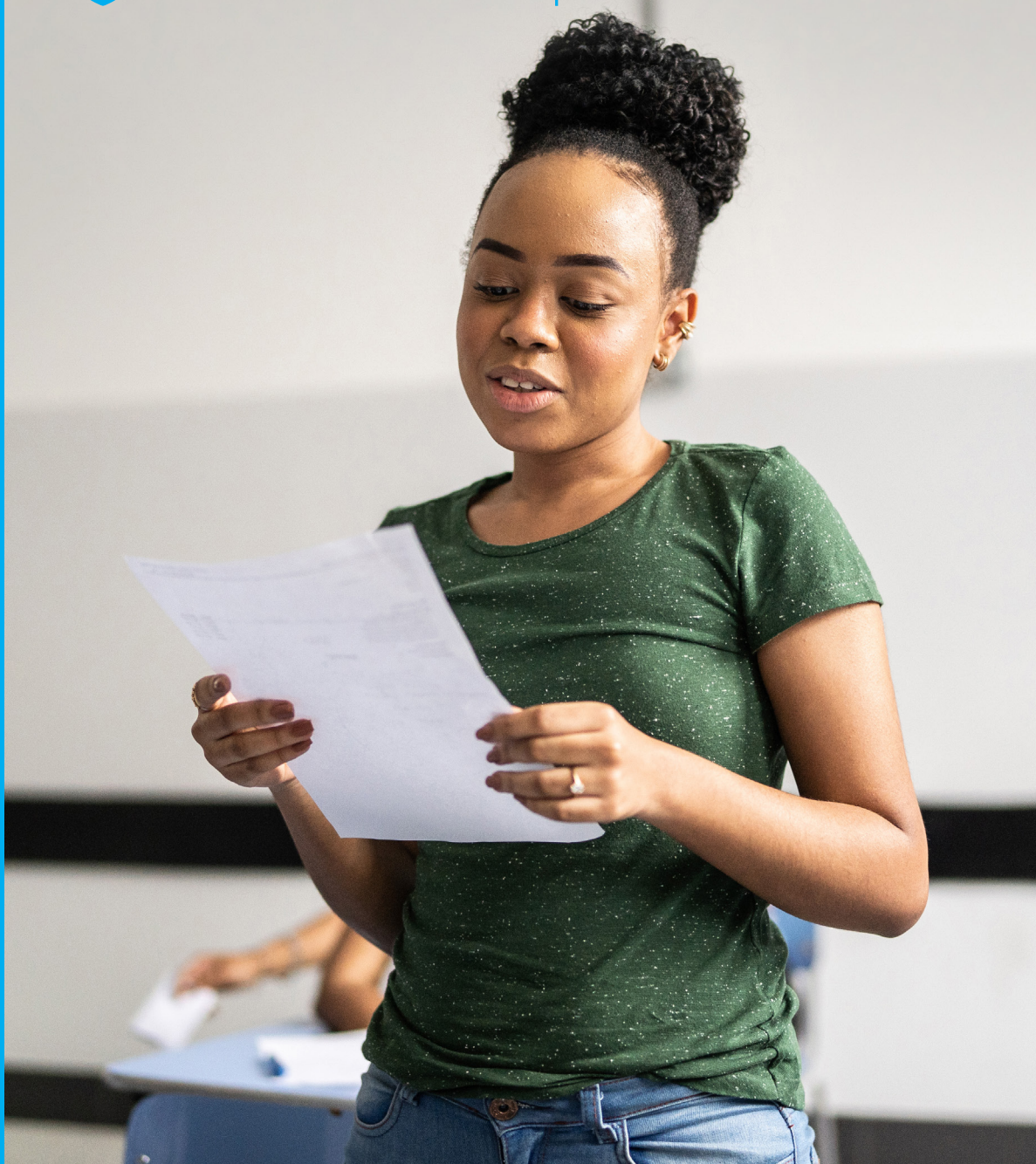




Listening and speaking (communication)

Age range: 11-19

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
60-75 mins	By the end of the activity students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the essential aspects of good communication, including its contribution to effective teamwork Demonstrate essential aspects of listening and speaking and other forms of communication Explain potential consequences of poor communication at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening and speaking (communication) student worksheet Listening and speaking (communication) presentation slides

Remember that you can refer to the guiding principles for establishing a safe learning environment in the Appendix section of the LifeSkills content guide. This includes suggestions for signposting students to further support. The content guide can be downloaded [here](#).

For 16-19 students to have voted on favourite celebrity speeches before starting this lesson, so speeches can be available to play.

Please note you will need pens and paper for this lesson.



LifeSkills is pleased to have worked with The National Autistic Society to ensure the following lesson plan can be adapted to suit the needs of autistic students.

If teaching a lesson including autistic students, please look out for some key considerations, marked with the NAS logo, when undertaking the following activities: Core transferable skills, Group work, Teamwork

Contents

Activities	Time	Page
Introduction to LifeSkills core transferable skills (11-19)	5 mins	3
Activity one: Defining good communication (11-19)	10 mins	5
Activity two: Forms of communication (11-16)	10 mins	6
Activity three: Putting listening and speaking into practice (11-16)	15 mins	6
Activity four: Active listening and speaking (16-19)	25 mins	8
Activity five: Next steps (11-19)	10 mins	10

Introduction to transferable skills

Economic, societal and technological forces are changing the world of work, and skills like staying positive (resilience), problem solving, creativity and leadership are becoming increasingly valuable to employers. Your students may already possess some of these core transferable skills but by improving them and developing others, they can be better prepared for the future workplace. By delivering each of the skill-based lessons in this suite you can encourage growth in all these areas or focus in on the ones your students need most.

- If this is the first LifeSkills lesson you have delivered with this group start by showing students **slide 2** which features each of the core transferable skills at the heart of the programme. Go through each skill and ask students if they can offer definitions (provided below), examples of these skills in action or explain how they might work together, for example being proactive to solve a problem
- If you have already introduced all these skills to the group and why they are all important, move on to the next step to explore the specific skill for this lesson in more detail. Use **slide 3** to focus in on the skill of Communication and explain how the activities in this lesson help them work towards specific steps of the Skills Builder Framework for listening and speaking
- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Please note that autistic people vary in their strengths (just like non-autistic people). Some of the core skills may be transferable but some may not – some people may for example, struggle with adaptability – dealing with change, because this can be anxiety inducing due to not knowing what to expect and the fear of the unknown. Those who may find this challenging – for them it would be best to be notified of (large or small) change in advance, so they can prepare and familiarise themselves with the forthcoming change so the change can be easier and less stressful to negotiate.

Core transferable skills



Problem solving skills are about the ability to find a solution to a complex situation or challenge, often using analytical thinking to come up with a methodical approach or break a problem down into parts



Creativity is the use of imagination and the generation of new ideas, and building the confidence to improve these ideas on your own and by collaborating with others



Listening and speaking (communication) is about receiving and retaining information, persuading and influencing others, and using critical thinking skills to evaluate different perspectives



Leadership is about recognising your own strengths in order to best support, encourage and motivate others to achieve a shared goal



Aiming high (being proactive) is the ability to set clear goals and prioritise tasks to achieve them, as well identifying when to take the initiative instead of reacting to external event



Staying positive (resilience) is about the ability to use tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks and achieve goals



Adaptability is having the skills to cope and thrive in response to changes and challenge



Teamwork is an important skills used when working with another person, or people in a group

Introduction to transferable skills (cont'd)

- The Skills Builder Framework, developed by the Skills Builder Partnership, provides a shared language and common expectations for eight essential skills: Listening; Speaking; Problem Solving; Creativity; Staying Positive; Aiming High; Leadership; Teamwork. LifeSkills content on transferable skills can be used to support a young person's progression through each of the essential skills, providing a relatable, real-world employability context and this relationship is indicated in brackets above
- LifeSkills lessons always include the opportunity for young people to work in groups and share ideas, as well as providing context for the importance of effective teamwork in the workplace. Look out for the teamwork icon in this lesson and throughout the core transferable skills content



Optional

The Skills Builder Framework provides measurable steps for eight essential skills and can be used in combination with this lesson to support your students' progress.

Skills Builder also offer a student Self-Assessment Tool, which helps learners to reflect on their own skill strengths and areas for development. This and other resources can be accessed on the Skills Builder Hub (skillsbuilder.org/hub).

Activity one

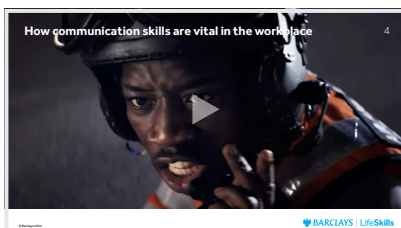
Defining good communication (11-19)

1. Discuss what good communication is

- Explain to students that one of the key skills at work surrounds communication and listening.
- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Remember, communication can be a challenge for some autistic people. Communication is a two-way process and it can have an effect from communicating with others in both directions – in understanding others messages and being understood by others. Messages can be taken very literally by some autistic people, so try to avoid metaphors. Also avoid hypothetical/what if messages too, because, miscommunications can occur. And misunderstandings can occur from all parties. Therefore, communications need to be clear, direct (but respectful), and summarised in writing where possible. Also check for understanding by asking open questions.
- Reading body language, including eye contact, expressions and tone of voice can be challenging for some autistic people. Avoid judging an autistic person if they cannot look you in the eye – and don't misconstrue lack of eye contact as lack of interest.
- Ask students what is meant by 'active listening' (being able to take in information and recall it). Active listening includes giving 100% focus, maintaining eye contact, checking understanding by asking clarifying questions and showing non-verbal cues such as nods or gestures that reflect maintained listening. This exercise will test their active listening skills
- Read out the list below. After each one has been communicated, get the class or various individuals to repeat the words:

Blue shoes, red ball, green rabbit, blue beetle, green unicorn, orange key, yellow socks, pink paper, green sphere, black plate

- Learners with memory and recall disabilities can complete this as a bingo activity by providing a grid with the different word pairs randomly in each box. Students then cross off each item as it is read out
- Once you have read out the final one and the class/individuals repeated it, invite students to name as many of them as they can remember. Can anyone remember them all?
- Explain that listening is a skill that needs to be practiced and developed. It is one of the most important skills they will need in life and for work. Ask if anyone can suggest techniques that can support listening to remember or absorb information, such as making notes or creating a rhyme
- This activity aligns with step 5 of the Skills Builder Framework for listening



2. Explore the listening skills video

- All jobs need the skill of listening, but in some jobs this skill is even more critical, for example as a Paramedic – if time allows, play the [listening skills video](#) on **slide 4** to show how important they can be
- Ask students how they can ensure they stay focused when listening to someone, and what makes it easier to listen and understand someone. Explain that communication is two-way – how someone speaks or presents effects how well the listener can understand what is being said, and these elements will be explored in this lesson

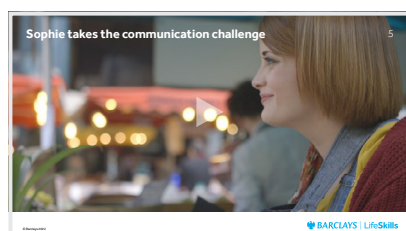
Activity two

Forms of communication (11-16)

1. Discuss the different ways we communicate

In small groups, ask students to discuss the phrase 'How do we communicate?'

- Make sure groups bring out the key areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening and presentation, but also that they recognise and discuss the differences between verbal and non-verbal communication
- Ask for feedback, then as a group, think of work-related situations when different forms of communication might be required, and why
- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Some autistic students can find group work challenging and can cause high anxiety. You may need to think of this as a reasonable adjustment for the student/s. Avoid pressuring/forcing or judging them. Instead listen, to understand any concerns they may have. Be flexible and prepare before so you can offer options and alternatives – such as working in pairs/smaller groups/assisting or working with the Teacher/Support instead. Also, don't make them feel left out/isolated or assume one way or another – that they can or can't join in – everyone is different and a lot may depend on the environment they are in and how comfortable they feel – so ask them what would be best to do and help them get the best out of the learning.



2. Watch the communication challenge video

- Watch [Sophie takes the communication challenge](#) on slide 5. For each of her customers, identify:
 - How Sophie communicates with that person. How do they react or change their behaviour? (i.e. the forms of communication she uses with them). Think about tone, language and non-verbal cues
 - The effect her ways of communicating (including listening and speaking) has on each customer
 - How her different methods of communication help her be more effective in her job
- This activity aligns with step 10 of the Skills Builder Framework for speaking and step 9 for listening

Activity three

Putting listening and speaking into practice (11-16)

Putting it into practice		
Story 1 – Paramedic	Story 2 – Air steward	Story 3 – Internet supplier
1. A paramedic has arrived at a car crash and there are more than five injured people	1. An air steward is serving 200 meals on a flight to New York	1. A call centre manager has their last call come through of the day at 5.45pm
2. The paramedic must tell the control room to send three more ambulances	2. Their colleague tells them 30 people are vegetarian and eight have allergies	2. A very angry customer says their internet stopped working two days ago
3. The paramedic must first treat the person with a neck injury in the blue car	3. A passenger asks if the food is dairy free and the steward says the chicken curry dish has dairy in	3. The manager looks in the booking diary to see when the next available engineer will be
4. One more ambulance then turns up with two paramedics to help	4. The air steward must tell their colleague that the passenger in seat 75B has a nut allergy	4. The manager tells the customer they will visit on Saturday between 11am-2pm
5. The last person the paramedic treats is a woman who has injured their left leg and right arm	5. The meal service takes 45 minutes to finish including serving tea or coffee	5. The manager contacts the engineer about the visit to the property to Sally Oak in Birmingham

1. Test students' listening and speaking skills

- Divide the class into groups of ideally no more than five and explain this will be a relay game to test their listening and speaking skills
- Print yourself a copy of **slide 6** but don't show it to the students yet. The stories include some tricky details to remember to test their listening skills so you can make the game harder by only agreeing to say the story line once

Activity three

Putting listening and speaking into practice (11-16) (cont'd)

- Allocate each group a story (there are 3 options so more than one group can have the same story) and ensure each group has some paper
- One person at a time from each group can come to the front for a line from the story. Explain they need to relay what they heard to their group. Students should think about how they communicate that information to their group e.g. write down key points, describe it verbally, use gestures or body language to help convey the story
- Once they have received all the lines of their story (5 per group), give each group a few minutes to produce a simple storyboard showing the key elements of the story and use this to present back to the class what they think the full story was
- Reveal the real stories on **slide 6** so they can compare for accuracy
- Now hand out the **Good communication worksheet** and ask students to review the stories using the 'what', 'who', 'why', 'when' model, helping them to identify the key elements of the story e.g. what was the paramedic trying to communicate, why did they need to share that information? etc

2. Reflect on the different communication methods

As a group, ask students to reflect on both the communication described in the stories and also their own communication methods in the relay. What could be the consequences in each situation of:

Effective or poor communication?

Using a different form of communication to the one identified?

Not communicating at all?

Not listening to what's being communicated?

Could the group have done anything differently to present the story more clearly? E.g. listen to one another more effectively, consider different people's perspectives and how they might like to receive information or really emphasise the most key bits of information

How could they change their tone, expression and gesture to make the speaking more engaging?

Ask students what job roles is it important to have effective communication in? Why do they think that good communication is so important for team-building, and what effect might this have in school and the workplace?

- This activity aligns with step 9 of the Skills Builder framework for listening

Activity four

Active listening and speaking (16-19)

1. Explore examples of good communicators

- Ahead of the lesson get the students to think of anyone in the public eye who has been successful with good communication (Listening and speaking) for example an influential celebrity or a world leader etc
- Ask students to discuss in groups why are these people engaging communicators and ask them to share their thoughts with the class
- Show a video or presentation of one of the public speakers they identified and whilst watching have students record on the **Inspirational communicators worksheet** the following details:
 - The key message and how many times it's repeated (speakers often repeat the key theme 3 times or more to make sure it sticks in their audiences' minds)
 - What theme did the speaker have and what do you think their intention is with the speech and what they will do next
 - Different communication tools used

What questions did it prompt you to think about? Did it persuade you to think differently about anything?

What did the speaker do well? How could they improve?

What was the speaker's language, tone and expression and how did the audience react to this?

Were there any risks/ implications – if so how could these have played out?

2. Plan answers to common interview questions

- Now encourage students to think about if they were in an interview situation, could they apply these strong communication skills to help them perform better?
- Ask students to plan their answers to some common interview questions replicating the style of the speaker they have just watched and considering all the things they recorded on their sheet e.g. tone, repetition of their key message, persuasive language etc
- Get students to practice their mock interview in pairs a couple of times to help them channel the strong communication skills they have identified. Select a few pairs to come and demonstrate at the front of the class and other students should see how many of the techniques they can spot being used.
- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Always check with autistic students to see if they are happy to speak/ demonstrate in front of others. Some autistic people are good and confident speakers and others could find it extremely anxiety inducing – so avoid overwhelming those who may struggle.

Activity four

Active listening and speaking (16-19) (cont'd)

3. Discuss how communication is a powerful tool

Discuss how communication is a powerful tool on both a big and small platform

Discuss why being able to communicate well is important generally. Draw out the importance of clear and effective communication at work – why is it important for an employer, an employee, and the workplace as a whole?

How do you know what someone listening to you is thinking or feeling? How can you adapt to their reactions? How can you use your language, tone and expression to influence and negotiate with another person?

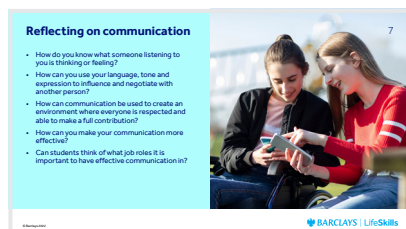
Discuss how communication can be used to create an environment where everyone is respected and able to make a full contribution. How can you make your communication more effective? E.g. consider different people's perspectives and how they might like to receive information or really emphasise the most key bits of information. These could help you in an interview or workplace situation

- This activity aligns with steps 10-15 of the Skills Builder Framework for speaking



Activity five

Creating new opportunities (16-19)



1. Think about how students communicate outside the classroom

- Encourage students to observe how they communicate with others beyond the classroom e.g. with people serving in shops, parents or carers at home, a receptionist at a surgery, someone at work etc. What forms of communication do they use? Is their communication effective? They could keep a communication diary for a couple of days and track all the ways they communicate

Ask students to reflect on why communication skills are so key to getting a job. For example, explain the importance of effective communication when writing a CV and covering letter or in an interview situation – what would be the consequence of not having effective communication skills in these situations?

2. Try the Skills Builder self-reflection activity

- If time allows, bring in a Skills Builder self-reflection activity – provide each student with a copy of the self-assessment and students can reflect on where they currently are with their listening/speaking skills
- This activity aligns with step 10 of the Skills Builder Framework for listening and step 10 for speaking

Try next

Try the [Adaptability](#) lesson next which follows this session well, as strong communication skills often means adapting your style to different situations and using your listening skills to take in information about how a situation is changing. To focus more on communicating online try a digital skills lesson.

3. Encourage feedback to the wider class

Ask teams the following questions to feedback to the wider class:

How can you adapt your language, tone and expression to fit your audience?
What are some of the ways that a listener can be influenced by what a speaker says?

Listening and speaking (communication)

Good communication

Use this sheet to reflect on the key elements of the relay stories. You can also use this structure if you are thinking ahead about a presentation, important conversation or interview to help you plan your communication and make it as effective as possible.

What

What needs to be communicated? What result do you want from the communication? How you construct the message will have an impact on how effective it is.

Who

Who do you need to communicate with? How much do they already know? Don't make assumptions that they will understand. Your message needs to be clear and complete.

How

What method is best? Text or email, or a personal call or face-to-face meeting? Which would they 'listen' to most? Do you need to limit who the communication goes to?

When

When is the best time to communicate the message? Instant messaging is not always best. Sometimes you need to pick the best moment for your message to be effective.

Listening and speaking (communication)

Inspirational communicators

Watch a clip of an inspirational speaker and note down your thoughts on these points:

The key message and how many times it's repeated (speakers often repeat the key theme 3 times or more to make sure it sticks in their audiences' minds)

The theme they spoke about and what their intention is with the speech and what they will do next

Any different communication tools used e.g. visual aids, body language

What questions did it prompt you to think about? Did it persuade you to think differently about anything?

The speaker's language, tone and expression and how did the audience react to this?

What did the speaker do well? How could they improve?

Did the speaker take any risks? What were the consequences?
