

# Listen to understand

14-18

## SUBJECT(S)

Civic education - Digital citizenship

## KEY COMPETENCES

- Communication in mother tongue
- Digital competence
- Learning to learn
- Social and civic competences
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

## TOPIC(S)

Listening is important to get and understand each other's point of view.

## PRINCIPLE(S) OF THE MANIFESTO OF NON-HOSTILE COMMUNICATION

2. You are what you communicate
3. Words shape the way you think
4. Listen before you speak
7. Share with care
8. Ideas can be discussed. People must be respected
9. An insult is not an argument

## KEY QUESTIONS

- Is it easy to listen?
- Who taught us to listen?
- When do we feel listened at?
- What are the ingredients of empathic listening?
- Are we able to listen to the other's point of view before answering?

## SOURCES

- » The Manifesto of non-hostile communication
- » "Empathic Listening", from "Inside Out", Pixar - Walt Disney Pictures, 2015 (video available at <https://youtu.be/t685WM5R6aM>)
- » "Bricks educational resources Hate Speech - video 4" (video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjd1X5a5L4E>)
- » Ambiguous images (<https://bit.ly/31Uqavh>)

## MATERIALS

- Tools to project videos and images
- Billboard

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

Introduction (10 minutes)

The teacher opens the meeting by enunciating the fourth principle of the Manifesto of non-hostile communication and asks the students if anyone has taught them to listen. We were probably taught to speak, write and read but not to listen. Yet, it is a fundamental part of communication, the most important to understand and respect the other.

Activity (100 minutes)

The teacher divides the pupils in pairs. The instruction is to talk in turn for 5 minutes describing and telling something about themselves (what sport they practice, what they like...). While one student is talking, the other pupil listens in silence without intervening.

At the end of the 5 minutes, students will have 5 more minutes to fill in an "identity card" of the partner, remaining faithful to the information they have received and remember. At this point the roles are reversed: who has listened will describe themselves and who has spoken before will put themselves in the listening role. (20 minutes)

The teacher collects all the "identity cards" and reads them out loud, without revealing the name of the person described.

The class will have to guess whose "identity card" it is and who is described will be able to say whether they recognise themselves in the description made by their partner. At the end, students and the teacher will try to reflect together on the following questions: Is it easy to listen in silence? Have you had the temptation to intervene? Have you discovered something new about your partner(s) and listened to them carefully? (20 minutes)

The teacher asks the pupils if they felt listened to during the activity. They are then given post-it notes on which to write the "ingredients" of a good listening: "I feel listened to when... (I am not interrupted, they look me in the eyes, my interlocutor does nothing else, etc.)". At the end the class will create a single document or a poster containing all the ingredients of an honest and open listening (20 minutes)

What are the elements that affect listening? The teacher shows the video "Bricks educational resources Hate Speech - video 4" (link in the "Sources"), stopping it several times and asking the students how the story continues in their opinion: what influences our ability to listen to both the non-verbal signals and the other person's words? Is there only my point of view? Am I willing to listen to the other person's point of view before speaking? How many times do we not listen carefully because "I know what the other person will say/do"? (20 minutes)

The teacher at this point asks a volunteer to tell a story about his or her day (for example: how they spent the previous afternoon from when they left school until they went to sleep). The teacher then gives each student a note with some directions, which must remain secret. In turn each partner will tell the story following the directions received, for example:

- It is the most beautiful story you have ever heard;
- You're in a hurry to finish the story because you're missing the train;
- It's a very sad story;
- The person in the story is the most unpleasant person you know;
- You lie about everything;
- You try to defend yourself because they accuse you of something;
- You want to gossip about the person and make insinuations.

The rest of the group will have to guess what the instructions received from the partner for the acting were.

At the end, reflect together on the following questions: how has the story changed?end of the tour we reflect together on the following questions: how has the story changed? Have prejudices influenced the information? Does this also happen in real life and on social media? (20 minutes)

Conclusion (10 minutes)

In conclusion, recalling the fourth principle of the Manifesto of non-hostile communication, the teacher proposes the viewing of a clip from the animated film "Inside Out" (Pixar - Walt Disney Pictures, 2015, link in "Sources") in which Sadness shows the power of active listening to help the other.

"Just listen": how many times do we really listen to the other to understand their point of view and welcome them and how many times (like Joy) do we try to give our solution?

Do we listen to understand or to answer?

## TIPS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- The activities can be proposed in several days.
- At home pupils can rewrite a fairy tale or a classic text from the antagonist's point of view (e.g. Little Red Riding Hood written from the wolf's point of view, Cinderella from the stepsisters' point of view, etc.).
- Starting from a study assignment, pupils can be divided into groups of three: one repeats to another what he or she has studied and understood about the topic assigned by the teacher to a partner who listens silently and carefully. The third person will have the role of the jammer, intervening, interrupting, asking questions, as the imagination suggests without using violent modes. When all the members of the group will have experienced the three roles, ask how they felt in the role of those who obstructed communication, what were the modes of disturbance that interrupted communication and how they responded to those who disturbed. Report the considerations on a billboard. What have we learned?
- To introduce the theme of points of view of the other, ambiguous figures can be proposed (link in "Sources") underlining that although everyone is looking at the same image, different people might see different things. Involve pupils in explaining the figure they see to those who cannot see it.