Listening and Speaking Activities
Grade 7
Contents

Teacher Notes 1–3 ................................................................. 1
Teacher Notes 4–8 ................................................................. 2
Teacher Notes 9–13 ................................................................. 3
Teacher Notes 14–18 ............................................................... 4
Teacher Notes 19–23 ............................................................... 5
Listening Actively I ............................................................... 6
Listening Actively II ............................................................... 7
Listening Critically ................................................................. 8
Communicating on the Telephone ............................................. 9
Taking Notes in Class I ............................................................ 10
Taking Notes in Class II .......................................................... 11
Interviewing .......................................................... 12
Interviewing with Technology .................................................. 13
Communicating Nonverbally I ................................................... 14
Communicating Nonverbally II ................................................... 15
Making Introductions ............................................................ 16
Speaking Informally I ............................................................. 17
Speaking Informally II ............................................................ 18
Speaking Formally ............................................................... 19
Reports: Speaking to Demonstrate .......................................... 20
Reports: Speaking to Inform ..................................................... 21
Reports: Speaking to Persuade .................................................. 22
Reports: Speaking to Entertain ................................................ 23
Reports: Reviewing Books and Films ....................................... 24
Presenting an Oral Interpretation of Poetry ................................ 25
Brainstorming .............................................................. 26
Conducting a Group Meeting ................................................ 27
Listening and Speaking in a Debate ......................................... 28
Teacher Notes

The Listening and Speaking Activities booklet provides five pages of teacher notes and twenty-three diverse classroom activities. Teacher notes explain the listening and speaking skills that each activity is meant to develop. Guidelines for facilitating discussion are included. The numbered items below answer the worksheet questions. Activity pages give students directions for completing the activity, suggestions for mastering the skills, and questions that help students learn from their individual and group efforts.

Listening and speaking skills require practice, stimulation, direction, and application. The activities, tips, and questions work together to bring about learning through a variety of creative, interactive experiences. Students may reflect on these challenges through discussion in class, in small groups, or through writing. Students learn from one another through cooperative learning activities that connect to both real-world experiences and across the curriculum to other areas of knowledge and interest.

Activity 1—Listening Actively 1 (page 6)
Objective: To learn by listening for informational clues that help students connect what they hear to what they know.

Suggestion: Encourage students to listen for details, steps in a process, and hints in the speaker’s voice.

1. Answers should indicate that students paid attention to details, steps in a process, and words stressed by the reader.
2. Answers should recognize the strategies mentioned in answer 1.
3. Answers should mention paying attention and listening for key information, as well as speaking loudly, clearly, and at a pace listeners can follow.

Activity 2—Listening Actively II (page 7)
Objective: To practice speaking clearly and listening closely for detailed information.

Suggestion: Encourage students to use note taking to help them listen and grasp overall meaning.

1. Answers should describe how note taking helps students grasp the overall meaning.
2. Answers should reflect students’ understanding that successful communication depends on both speaker and listener.
3. Answers should indicate that taking notes helps a listener pay attention and think about what is heard.

Activity 3—Listening Critically (page 8)
Objective: To analyze the complex communication used in advertising.

Suggestion: If possible, choose a wide variety of advertisements including several different brands of the same product.

1. Answers should reflect an awareness of images, sound, slogans, and ideas.
2. Answers should explore issues stated in answer 1.
3. Answers should note that advertisements use music and clever slogans that attract customers, influence their feelings, and stay in their memories in order to get them to buy products.
Activity 4—Communicating on the Telephone (page 9)

Objective: To consider various styles of telephone conversations.

Suggestion: Before beginning, invite the class to brainstorm a variety of situations involving the telephone.

1. Answers should note the speaker’s tendency to speak more clearly and politely in formal situations than in informal ones.
2. Answers should reflect an awareness of the speaker’s adaptation to the audience.
3. Answers should note that tone of voice can help communicate the message clearly; that a listener relies on voice alone in a phone conversation; and that gestures, facial expressions, and body language cannot be seen.

Activity 5—Taking Notes in Class I (page 10)

Objective: To learn that listening is an important part of learning and that listening for and taking notes on key ideas produce good notes.

Suggestion: If students do not have a textbook for a class in which they will soon be tested, direct them to read a passage they have not yet studied.

1. Answers should discuss strengths and weaknesses in note-taking techniques.
2. Answers should focus on both speaker and note taker.
3. Answers should reflect that the students would listen carefully for a complete explanation.

Activity 6—Taking Notes in Class II (page 11)

Objective: To practice using a two-column format for taking class notes.

Suggestion: Before students begin the activity, model this note-taking method on the blackboard. Allow time for students to ask questions before the activity and to discuss their results afterward.

1. Answers should include specific examples from students’ experiences.
2. Answers should reflect the different learning styles of individual students.
3. Answers should include specific reasons for or against recommending this technique.

Activity 7—Interviewing (page 12)

Objective: To learn to ask questions in an interview that elicit information and to develop skill in adapting questioning to accommodate new information.

Suggestion: Help students create questions that will elicit informative answers. Demonstrate the advantage of open-ended and follow-up questions by modeling an interview with a student for the class.

1. Answers should reflect an appreciation of open-ended and original questions.
2. Answers should demonstrate an understanding that both general and specific questions are useful.
3. Answers should mention that an interviewer asks open-ended questions, listens closely, adapts to new information, and tries to create a pleasant, relaxed situation.

Activity 8—Interviewing with Technology (page 13)

Objective: To use technology to recognize major strengths and weaknesses of students’ listening, speaking, and interviewing skills.

Suggestion: If access to video equipment is limited, enlarge the size of the groups to five and recast the interview as a panel discussion.

1. Answers should demonstrate an understanding of how unspoken language communicates information.
2. Answers should mention that interviewers listen for follow-ups, and subjects listen for clarity.
3. Answers should indicate a critical analysis of the recordings and efforts for improvement.
Teacher Notes

Activity 9—Communicating Nonverbally I (page 14)
Objective: To discover the range and impact of nonverbal communication.
Suggestion: Encourage students to notice how gestures and words work together to convey meaning; for example, gestures can direct attention to important points.
1. Answers should indicate an awareness of ways in which gestures influence daily communication.
2. Answers should reflect an awareness of individual differences in use of body language.
3. Answers should note that gestures and words work together to convey meaning.

Activity 10—Communicating Nonverbally II (page 15)
Objective: To practice appropriate nonverbal language to accompany spoken language and to realize the effects of inappropriate nonverbal communication.
Suggestion: Begin the activity by asking students to describe situations in which a person’s words might not match his or her body language. Ask how this behavior affected their reaction to what was being said.
1. Answers should indicate students’ awareness that gestures and words need to fit together.
2. Answers should note that mismatched words and gestures can impede communication.
3. Answers should describe the effects of the mismatch, such as humor, discomfort, or confusion.

Activity 11—Making Introductions (page 16)
Objective: To learn basic listening and speaking skills that foster positive interaction and to adapt students’ skills to different situations.
Suggestion: Before students begin the activity, allow them to discuss their experiences with making introductions.
1. Answers should indicate an understanding of such introduction techniques as using full names, speaking and gesturing clearly, and mentioning something about the people being introduced.
2. Answers should reflect students’ understanding that skillful introductions help people feel comfortable.
3. Answers should mention that because many interactions take place quickly, everyone involved in an introduction should speak clearly, listen closely, and make gestures that are friendly and open.

Activity 12—Speaking Informally I (page 17)
Objective: To use informal listening and speaking styles to converse about a topic.
Suggestion: Point out that an informal discussion is one that might take place at lunch, at a social gathering, or at the family dinner table. Ask students to recall such experiences as they plan the activity.
1. Answers should discuss both verbal and nonverbal communication.
2. Answers should recognize effective listening and speaking skills.
3. Answers should include making eye contact and friendly gestures, asking interesting questions, and sharing ideas openly.

Activity 13—Speaking Informally II (page 18)
Objective: To learn to adapt an announcement to the listening needs of various audience members.
Suggestion: Help students understand that an announcement should fit the audience and occasion and should be clear and complete.
1. Answers should reflect an awareness of the announcement’s audience and purpose.
2. Answers should indicate an awareness of the value of clarity, interest, appropriate tone, and content.
3. Answers should mention that the announcer must gain everyone’s attention, speak clearly, and ask if there are questions.
Teacher Notes

Activity 14—Speaking Formally (page 19)
Objective: To learn to develop a speech through a process of prewriting, drafting, and revision.
Suggestion: Encourage students to adapt their personal style of expression to a formal speaking situation. Share recordings of famous speeches to give students ideas about style.

1. Answers should focus on positive qualities of self-expression.
2. Answers should mention specific details and strategies, such as tone of voice and facial expressions that can support and focus a spoken message.
3. Answers should demonstrate students’ awareness about voices they hear in the media and about the qualities of an effective speech.

Activity 15—Reports: Speaking to Demonstrate (page 20)
Objective: To develop a clear and engaging approach to a demonstration.
Suggestion: After students watch the video or television program, work with them to identify effective approaches to demonstrating a skill through speech. On the board, create a class list of such approaches.

1. Answers should reflect understanding that demonstration requires preparation and confidence so that the actions and words work together.
2. Answers should mention that visual aids can support and focus the spoken message.
3. Answers should include specific techniques, such as breaking down the process into steps, using visual aids for each step, and summarizing.

Activity 16—Reports: Speaking to Inform (page 21)
Objective: To learn to express information clearly and in an interesting way and to adapt speaking style to an audience.
Suggestion: After the speeches have been completed, work with students to create a class list of successful public-speaking skills.

1. Answers should note that students simplified the information and considered what would interest first-graders; an older audience would require adjustments in interest level and presentation.
2. Answers should reflect a critical analysis of students’ speeches and recognition of successful techniques.
3. Answers should include specific strategies, such as focusing the topic and relating it closely to the daily experience and understanding of the audience.

Activity 17—Reports: Speaking to Persuade (page 22)
Objective: To learn to use evidence and effective speaking skills to persuade an audience.
Suggestion: Before beginning the activity, encourage students to review the persuasive strategies described in their textbook and those they have used successfully in the past.

1. Student answers should note the need to express conviction, sincerity, and clear thinking.
2. Answers should note the methods others use.
3. Answers should recognize that opinions influence the kind of argument used and that evidence supports opinions.

Activity 18—Reports: Speaking to Entertain (page 23)
Objective: To gain confidence in oral presentation and invention. To recognize the unique qualities of their own skills at storytelling.
Suggestion: Try to ensure that there is ample space between the groups. For this activity to work effectively, students must be relatively free of distraction.

1. Answers will vary but should indicate an awareness of cohesive transitions and successful elements of storytelling.
2. Answers should reflect an awareness of individual differences.
3. Answers should note that gestures and voice can advance the action, develop characters, and emphasize details.
Teacher Notes

Activity 19—Reports: Reviewing Books and Films (page 24)
Objective: To develop persuasive and critical skills through presenting a review.
Suggestion: Encourage students to discuss evaluation criteria for books and movies and to use these criteria in their reviews.
1. Answers should include techniques such as providing examples and general information about the book or film as well as the reviewer’s opinions.
2. Answers will reflect different ways to show enthusiasm, disappointment, and other responses.
3. Answers should note that a reviewer presents ideas in a tone that matches his or her opinion; a reviewer should explain clearly how he or she arrived at a conclusion about a work.

Activity 20—Presenting an Oral Interpretation of a Poem (page 25)
Objective: To learn to interpret poetry through vocal expression and gesture.
Suggestion: Before students begin, consider playing a tape of a fluent poetry reading, preferably by the poet. Ask students to discuss techniques they found particularly effective.
1. Answers should recognize that the reader’s voice can convey the mood of the poem.
2. Answers might touch upon the strong oral tradition of poetry and poetry’s connection to song.
3. Answers should note that a reader ought to bring out the feeling of a poem by paying attention to rhythm, flow of lines, repetition, and other special qualities of poetry.

Activity 21—Brainstorming (page 26)
Objective: To practice listening and speaking skills that can stimulate creativity, develop tolerance for new ideas, and promote group cooperation.
Suggestion: Point out that each member of the group brings a unique perspective to the table, and that the group’s openness to different perspectives makes the brainstorming process more dynamic and effective.
1. Answers should recognize that building on other participants’ ideas can lead to new insights.
2. Answers should mention fairness, politeness, and attentiveness.
3. Answers should demonstrate students’ awareness that evaluation can inhibit the free flow of ideas. Brainstorming means trying new ideas that may or may not work, and participants need to keep their minds open.

Activity 22—Conducting a Group Meeting (page 27)
Objective: To learn by assuming a variety of roles in a group meeting.
Suggestion: After the activity, invite students to share their experiences by describing how they reached a consensus. Discuss the skills involved in conducting successful meetings.
1. Answers should reflect an understanding of the different skills required by different roles.
2. Answers should note specific leadership qualities, such as organization and focus.
3. Answers should reflect students’ understanding that fair rules allow everyone to participate, that a leader provides guidance, and that respect for one another allows the process to work.

Activity 23—Listening and Speaking in a Debate (page 28)
Objective: To build debating skills by moving from an informal discussion of different views to a more organized presentation of evidence.
Suggestion: Remind students that in a debate, it is important to evaluate the points the opposing side makes as well as to express your own ideas effectively.
1. Answers should note that casual opinions often are not supported by evidence.
2. Answers should note strategies such as thinking logically, using evidence, and sounding reasonable.
3. Answers should reflect that a debate involves stating a position and arguing against another position.
1 Listening Actively I

Activity
Bring to class step-by-step instructions for doing a familiar activity, such as making a salad, recording a TV program, heating frozen food, or assembling a toy. Use prewritten instructions or write out your own. Read your instructions to the class but don’t say what activity the instructions describe.

Listen closely as each classmate reads his or her instructions. Try to guess what activity the instructions describe. Listen for key words related to the activity and for a sense of how the steps connect. Take notes as you listen. In discussing your responses, try to explain what parts of the instructions helped you arrive at the answer.

Tips
- Listen for the particular information and key words that will help you recognize the process: steps involved, related equipment and activities, safety precautions.
- Don’t try to write down every word. Instead, jot down a few words to remind yourself of important points.
- Read over your notes to make sense of the description. If you missed a point, ask the speaker to reread it.
- Listen to your classmates’ responses to see if they picked up on something that you missed.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. Which clues helped you recognize the different activities?

2. Which clues helped other students? Which caused confusion?

3. How can you help yourself listen effectively? What can a speaker do to help listeners understand instructions?
2 Listening Actively II

Activity
Working in groups of four, take turns talking for a few minutes about a subject that you know quite well but which will be new to other group members. You might describe a family tradition, a hobby, or a favorite place. Whatever the subject, your description should include details. Before you start, take a few minutes to plan what you want to say about your subject.

As you listen to each description, take notes and ask questions. Then briefly summarize the remarks (use a different page for each speaker). After everyone has spoken, submit each summary to the speaker to check your accuracy. Discuss each presentation. What made it easy to follow? How could the speaker have made the subject clearer?

Tips
• Try to focus on the speaker. Ignore background noise and other distractions. Pay attention.
• Identify the most important things the person is saying.
• Try to connect the details to the main point.
• Listen to the comments of other group members. Find out how they were able to listen effectively and identify problems they encountered.
• When you present your description, speak clearly and at a pace others can follow.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. How detailed were your notes about each description? How well did you grasp the overall messages?

2. What made some presentations easy to follow and others more difficult?

3. How can taking notes help you listen more effectively?
3 Listening Critically

Activity
Pay close attention as your teacher plays tapes of a few different TV commercials. Look at the images, listen to the music, and think about the slogans. Jot down facts presented about the products and note the feeling each commercial creates.

Now form a group of four people. Make a shopping list of the following products: shampoo, toothpaste, juice, soup, peanut butter, bread, and cereal. You must decide on which brands to buy (remember that unadvertised brands sometimes cost less). You must also decide at which fast-food restaurant you will eat after shopping. As you discuss your options, think about how advertising influences your choices. If possible, jot down one advertising image or slogan and one fact to describe each product on your list. Decide which has more effect on your group’s shopping decisions—the ads or the facts.

Tips
• Try to notice what grabs your attention in an ad and how it influences your view of the product.
• Identify what is fact in an advertisement. How does the ad try to affect people’s feelings about the product?
• Notice how some advertising slogans stay in your memory. Consider how this affects your decisions about what to buy.
• Compare your group’s impressions of certain brands to your own preferences. Think about how people listen and respond differently to advertising.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. What elements of advertising influence you most?

2. How were the members of your group influenced by the advertising that they just heard?

3. How might advertising slogans affect consumers?
4 Communicating on the Telephone

Activity
Form a group of four students. Brainstorm a list of different work and personal situations that depend on telephone communication. Discuss different styles of communication that are called for in various situations. Then act out some telephone situations such as the following:

• a friend calling to leave a birthday party invitation on an answering machine
• classmates arranging a time and place to work on their joint science project
• a person calling to find out what a car repair will cost
• a volunteer calling for donations to an organization
• a person calling 911 to report a fire

Try to choose some friendly calls and some that are more businesslike.

Tips
• Speak clearly and directly into the receiver. Identify yourself before asking to speak to someone.
• Speak at a pace that the listener can follow. Slow down when giving numbers or information.
• When leaving a message on a machine, take extra care to speak clearly. Include your name, number, and a brief message.
• Use good manners and a tone that is appropriate for the situation.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. How is the tone you use in businesslike or impersonal situations different from the tone you use when calling friends?

2. How do various speakers sound in different situations?

3. Why is tone of voice important in phone conversations?
5 Taking Notes in Class I

Activity
Work with a partner. Open your textbook to a subject on which you will soon be tested. Take turns reading aloud from the chapter. As one person reads, the partner should take notes. After you have both had a chance to practice taking notes, review the notes together. Are the notes accurate, and do they cover all the important points? Look for gaps and confusion in the notes and try to see whether you have missed something important.

Tips
• Listen for main ideas. Emphasize important concepts in your notes. Listen for cues in the speaker’s voice that indicate something is a key idea.
• Listen for a complete explanation of a key idea and then summarize it in your notes.
• Don’t become so busy taking detailed notes that you stop listening to the speaker.
• Review your notes and ask follow-up questions if some points are not clear.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. How complete and clear were your notes?

2. Was your partner able to take good notes from your reading? How did you use your voice and gestures to help him or her understand?

3. What should you do when you hear a main idea presented in class?
6 Taking Notes in Class II

Activity
One way to make sure that you have room to jot down your questions or comments as you review your class notes is to use a two-column format. On each page of your notebook, make a large T over the whole page. Write the title of the lecture or speech across the top of the T. On the left side of the vertical line, write your notes. Use whatever shorthand or symbols you normally use when taking notes. As you review your notes, use the right side of the vertical line to record your comments or questions at the appropriate point in the lecture. This way, you can use your notes or even the teacher’s own words to help you phrase your comments or questions.

Tips
• Repeat the two-column format on as many pages as necessary.
• Place your comments and questions so that they line up with the notes on which they are based.
• Refer to your notes as you formulate your questions to help you write thoughtful and complete questions, which, in turn, will get you the most helpful response.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. How did this form of note taking allow you to interact with the new information?

2. What kinds of questions did you write in the right-hand column? How did the format help you clarify your thinking?

3. Would you recommend this form of note taking to a classmate? Why or why not?
**7 Interviewing**

**Activity**
First decide on a secret identity. Imagine you are someone who is well known—a celebrity, a historical figure, or a fictional character. Then work with a partner but do not tell who you are. It is your partner’s job to guess your secret identity by interviewing you. Answer the questions in character. If you don’t know an answer, respond in a way you think fits the person. Besides asking questions that will allow you to reveal interesting sides of your character, the interviewer should take notes. After your partner guesses your identity, reverse roles and try to discover your partner’s secret identity. Finally, write a short profile of the person you interviewed. Include at least one quote from the interview.

**Tips**
- Start with general questions. As you learn more about the person, make your questions more specific and personal.
- Ask open-ended questions—that is, questions that allow the speaker to give an extended answer. Such questions often begin with why or how.
- Listen closely to your partner’s answers and create new questions from these responses.
- Move on to another question if the interviewee seems confused or uncomfortable.

**Questions for Response or Discussion**
1. Which of your partner’s questions let you reveal the most interesting sides of your character?

2. Did you get more valuable information from general questions or from specific ones?

3. What can an interviewer do to encourage someone to talk?
Activity
Work with two partners to create and record an interview on a topic of interest to students your age. You might choose a TV show, a music group, or a social problem. The three of you will take turns being each of three people in the interview. The interviewer asks questions. The subject answers them. The producer operates the tape recorder or video camera.

First, brainstorm to discover ways to interest your audience in the topic. Then plan questions for the interviewer to ask. Use a general outline but also be ready to follow up on an interesting reply. Record your interviews; then review them together.

Tips
• As interviewer or subject, think of how to use gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice. The interviewer, for example, might lean toward the subject to express interest.
• As interviewer, plan questions that begin with how and why. Such questions encourage the subject to open up in an interview.
• As subject, make sure your answers respond to the questions.
• As interviewer, politely guide the conversation back to the topic if necessary.
• As producer, understand how to operate the equipment before you begin.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. What did you learn about the impressions you can convey using nonverbal communication—that is, your tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions?

2. Did your method of listening change when you switched from being the interviewer to being the subject? In what ways?

3. What can you do to make your taped presentation more effective?
Activity
Get together with four classmates. On slips of paper, list at least six different emotions. (Happiness, sorrow, anger, confusion, fatigue, friendliness, fear, shyness, excitement, and confidence are possibilities.) Take turns picking one slip. Without using words, demonstrate a gesture that expresses the emotion written on the slip. The other group members should try to guess the emotion that the gesture demonstrates. Then discuss how those gestures (or other gestures group members suggest) show the intended emotion. Allow for different interpretations of certain gestures; not everyone uses the same body language.

Tips
• Body language is a term for the nonverbal ways we express our feelings and attitudes. Gestures, facial expressions, and other body language clues help show how we feel.
• Details of body language communicate different feelings and ideas and can be used by both speakers and listeners.
  Posture: Erect or bent? Leaning forward or slouching?
  Facial Expressions: Does the speaker make eye contact? Is the smile sincere? Does the expression correspond to the topic being discussed?
  Gestures: Does the speaker use a fist, a finger, or an open hand to emphasize key points?
• The way we feel often affects the way we look and move—even when we don’t want to communicate our feelings. To express an emotion, concentrate on the feeling and let it become visible to others.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. What gestures do you commonly use? How do they help you communicate?

2. How did your group members express similar feelings in different ways?

3. Which conveys emotion more strongly—gestures or words? How do they work together?
Activity
Work with a partner. Each of you should write two different messages, one expressing a positive idea or emotion (such as good news, gratitude, or welcome), and the other communicating a negative idea or emotion (bad news, anger, or fear). Take turns reading your messages aloud to each other. First read them in a tone of voice and with gestures that fit the tone of the message. Then read the messages with the wrong set of nonverbal signals. Read the positive message in an angry or bored tone and the negative message in a bubbly, affectionate tone. Discuss the results.

Tips
• Use your hands, facial expressions, and posture as well as the pitch, tone, and volume of your voice to convey nonverbal messages.
• Note how your use of the “wrong” body language affects your partner.
• Listen closely to your partner’s voice during both readings and look directly at him or her. Note what nonverbal signals are used.
• Watch the gestures used by a politician, a talk-show host, or an actor in an advertisement. Think about what message each individual’s body language is intended to convey.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. Did using the wrong gestures change the way you felt about the words you were saying?

2. When your partner read the words with the opposite set of nonverbal messages, what happened to your understanding?

3. How might the use of incorrect signals affect real-life communication?
11 Making Introductions

Activity
Work in a group of three students. Take turns introducing one another in several different imaginary situations. For example, you might practice introducing a new student to another young person, a friend to a visiting relative, and your parent to the parent of a new friend. Experiment with introducing people of different ages and relationships. After you make the actual introduction, mention some shared interests that might spark a conversation between the two people you’ve introduced.

Discuss how the situation and people involved affected your introductions. Then share one of your examples with the class.

Tips
• Make eye contact when introducing someone and when you are introduced.
• Use hand gestures to show whom you are introducing. If someone extends a hand, shake hands firmly and briefly.
• When introducing people, use their full names. Try to mention something interesting about each person in order to start the conversation.
• Use the name of someone you just met immediately in the conversation so you will remember it.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. What can you do to start the conversation smoothly when you introduce people?

2. How did other group members make you feel as they introduced you?

3. How do speaking, listening, and nonverbal communication work together in introductions?
Activity
Meet with a group of six students for a discussion. Select a topic that is acceptable to all, perhaps from the following list:

• What makes ___________ such a popular TV show
• Safety precautions for in-line skating
• Ways to make a local museum or another institution more interesting for middle-school students
• Things a family can do to protect the environment

One goal of discussion can be to reach an agreement on an idea or a project. Discussions are more lively when people have different opinions and experiences to share. If all group members have similar ideas about a topic, you may want to choose a different one.

Tips
• Use voice, words, and gestures to help others understand your ideas.
• Listen carefully to other people in the group so that you can respond intelligently to their ideas. Do not interrupt.
• Speak clearly.
• Make eye contact. Draw others into the conversation.
• Even if you disagree, be polite. State why you think the idea expressed isn’t good or why your idea is better. Don’t criticize the person with whom you disagree.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. Which presentation methods most effectively presented your ideas?

2. How did other members of the group present their ideas? What methods helped make you agree with another member?

3. What skills did you use (or see others use) in this activity that might be helpful in future conversations?
13 Speaking Informally II

Activity
In a group of four classmates, list eight different situations that would result in an announcement. Each member of the group should choose a different one of the situations. Work together as a group so all of you understand the audience and other factors involved in making each announcement. Using advice from the group, work on your own to make notes and to prepare your announcement. Then make your announcement to the group. Discuss what was good about each announcement and what could have been done differently. Try making another announcement in the same way.

Tips
• Provide all the important information your audience needs to respond to the announcement but decide which details are really necessary. Drop those that aren’t needed.
• Use a tone that fits the announcement and your role in the situation.
• Speak clearly. Present details at a pace listeners can follow. Repeat the announcement.
• Ask if there are questions.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. How did you decide what information to include and what tone to use?

2. What made some announcements more effective than others?

3. What qualities go into making a good announcement?
Activity
In a group, discuss situations that might call for a formal speech. Think of ceremonies, public events, contests, and political events. Choose a situation that interests you and brainstorm with the group about possible topics.

On your own, prewrite to get your ideas started. Next, draft your speech. Write your main point in one clear sentence. Then think of what you will include in the introduction, body, and conclusion. Practice your speech with the group. Using their suggestions, revise your speech to make the ideas clear and the words interesting and powerful. Deliver the speech with a tone of voice and gestures that fit the occasion.

Tips
- Read or listen to great speeches, such as Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream.” Choose a model that is similar to the type of speech you want to give.
- Consider your audience. What will keep your listeners interested? What do they already know about your topic?
- Consider your own voice. Think about how you express yourself best. If you are normally a serious person, don’t try to be too funny, or your speech may sound false.
- Read your speech aloud. Rewrite lines that sound awkward or weak.
- Practice your speech until you feel comfortable and confident.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. What elements of your personal style of self-expression could you adapt to suit a formal speech?

2. What did other speakers in the group do to make their speeches effective?

3. What is your favorite famous speech? Who do you think is a great speaker? Explain.
15 Reports: Speaking to Demonstrate

**Activity**

On your own or with a partner, watch a video or a television program that shows how to do something. You might choose a program about cooking, home repairs, exercise, or visual art. Take notes about the method used to teach the skill. List the steps and the audiovisual aids used. Also explain how the host or guest uses words to make the demonstration clear and interesting.

Brainstorm with a partner about skills you could demonstrate. Design your own television how-to program for an audience of your choice. On note cards, outline the steps you will teach in a five-minute segment. Choose visual aids to highlight each step of the process. Practice your demonstration, adding cues to your cards. Videotape your program or present it to the class in person.

**Tips**

- Think about your purpose. TV programs can teach and entertain, but the emphasis is on the how-to purpose of the demonstration.
- Practice using visual aids so that your movements are natural and do not interfere with your speaking.
- Consider the steps you are demonstrating. Be sure each step is complete, clear, and easy to follow.
- As you prepare and practice, plan to give your program an introduction that interests your audience and a conclusion that summarizes the skill you are demonstrating.

**Questions for Response or Discussion**

1. What challenges did you face in demonstrating your skill?

2. How did your visual aids help the audience understand your demonstration?

3. What does a speaker need to do in order to make a process understandable and interesting?
16 Reports: Speaking to Inform

Activity
Make a list of subjects you know a lot about or that interest you. Ideas might come from your after-school activities, hobbies, family, or a favorite class. Choose a topic that you think would be interesting to first-graders.

Now prepare to present a short speech (2–3 minutes) about your topic to a first-grade class. Prewrite to find the most interesting information. Make a short outline; then put your main ideas and supporting information onto note cards. In a small group, practice giving your speech in a manner that will interest young children.

Tips
• Select a topic with your audience in mind. What interests you may be far less interesting to first-graders.
• Adjust the language and form of your presentation to hold the attention of a younger audience.
• Consider which visual aids would help spark interest and illustrate your ideas. Mark your note cards to show when to present visual aids.
• As you deliver your report, make eye contact and use gestures. Pause to emphasize your major points.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. How did you adapt your speech for this audience? What would you have done differently had your audience been older?

2. What did other speakers do to get their ideas across?

3. What does a speaker have to think about in order to make a subject clear and interesting for a particular audience?
Activity
In a small group, brainstorm things you would like to change about your school, community, or country. Find an issue that makes you want to speak out. Decide what audience is most affected by this issue. Brainstorm with your group ways in which you could persuade this audience to agree with you or to take action.

On your own, prewrite to clarify your thoughts about the issue. Next, research the issue by gathering facts at the library or by talking with experts. Then make note cards that will help you to state your points clearly and to organize your ideas in the best way. Finally, meet again with the small group to practice your speech. Give other group members suggestions about what additional facts and ideas or changes in presentation may work to persuade the audiences they want to address. Revise your own presentation based on your classmates’ suggestions.

Tips
- Recall how you arrived at your opinion. While prewriting, list some facts and feelings that persuaded you to adopt this view.
- Consider your audience. As you prewrite, think about what evidence will convince them.
- Put one point or piece of evidence on each note card. Rearrange the cards until the ideas connect and your argument develops clearly.
- For the conclusion of your speech, repeat your major points in order. Restate your opinion.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. What did you try to communicate through voice and gestures in your speech?

2. How did the other speakers in your group communicate their views?

3. Why are both opinions and evidence important in a persuasive speech?
18 Reports: Speaking to Entertain

**Activity**
In groups of four students, practice telling familiar stories in new ways. Begin telling a fairy tale or myth. After a few sentences, let another storyteller take over, adding to the story in a unique way with sound effects, voices, and gestures. Continue taking turns until the whole story is told.

After some practice with familiar stories, try making up a new story in the same way. Take turns letting each person add a few lines to the story. Record your group story (on audiotape or in writing) and work through it again, looking for ways to make the whole story and your presentation more interesting.

**Tips**
- Make your presentation entertaining. Surprise listeners with your storytelling style—try broader gestures, unusual facial expressions, and louder and softer voices to create a mood.
- Use dialogue to develop the characters in your story. Give each character a different voice, one that tells something about that character’s personality.
- Add sensory details that will help listeners feel like they are part of the story.
- Note how other members help develop the group’s story. Try to connect a story’s beginning, middle, and end. Add to the interest and suspense of the story.

**Questions for Response or Discussion**
1. How well were different elements added to the group’s stories?

2. How did members of your group differ in their storytelling styles?

3. How is body language (especially gestures and tone of voice) important in storytelling?
19 Reports: Reviewing Books and Films

Activity
With a partner, listen to a book or movie review on television or radio. Notice how the reviewer introduces and evaluates the book or film. Discuss how what the reviewer says might influence your decision to read the book or to see the movie.

With your partner, choose a book or film for each of you to review orally. Or you may want to work with your partner to present your reviews of the same work together. Discuss your opinions of the works you have chosen and prewrite to decide what you want to say. Outline your points and practice talking about the work in a way that will influence your audience. Present your review to the class.

Tips
• Reviewing a book or film involves persuasive speaking. Review Unit 6 of Writer’s Choice for ideas on persuading an audience.

• Consider your purpose. Your review may entertain listeners, and it will certainly inform the audience. Your main purpose, however, is to persuade listeners to take your advice about seeing the move or reading the book. Include information about what kinds of audiences will enjoy the film or book.

• Choose a tone that suits the kind of book or film you are reviewing and the way you feel about it. Adapt your gestures to fit the tone.

• Use examples from the film or book to illustrate your views.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. What did you do to give your audience an understanding of the book or film you reviewed?

2. How did other reviewers emphasize their attitudes toward the films and books they reviewed?

3. How can a reviewer present facts and opinions in a way that will influence listeners?
**Activity**

Imagine a special occasion for which you might be asked to read a poem—a wedding, graduation, birthday, funeral, holiday, or some other event of your choice. Find or write a poem that fits the mood of the event. Choose a relatively short poem so your reading takes between one and three minutes.

Working in small groups, practice introducing the poem and interpreting it through oral reading. Listeners should make suggestions to help you give a stronger interpretation of the poem. After practicing, read the poem to the class.

**Tips**

- Choose a poem that fits the mood of the occasion and make sure your voice and gestures convey that mood.
- Many readers tend to pause at the end of every line of a poem. Sometimes that approach creates a stiff, singsong effect. Try pausing only at the punctuation marks.
- As you practice, pay attention to the rhythm of the poem. Don’t rush the words. Don’t stop and start randomly. Let your voice follow the lines so the poem flows smoothly.
- Identify parts of the poem that should stand out. Try changing your delivery in such parts. Pause or use a different tone or gesture. Mark that part of the poem to remind yourself to adjust your reading.

**Questions for Response or Discussion**

1. How did you use your voice to express feeling as you read the poem aloud?

2. How does hearing poems read aloud compare with reading poems in books?

3. What methods can you use to create an effective oral interpretation of a poem?
21 Brainstorming

Activity
Meet with four other students for a brainstorming session. Before you begin, think about how brainstorming works: Everyone participates freely to get ideas started. The first goal is to share ideas—leave evaluation and criticism for later in the session.

Suggest topics for brainstorming with your group. You might plan an event or solve a problem. When you have chosen a topic, take turns to share everyone’s ideas. Each member should listen and take notes as others speak. Allow everyone to comment on any ideas mentioned before or to bring up new thoughts. Then look over your notes and see how the idea has grown.

Tips
• Some people prefer to divide brainstorming sessions into two parts. The first is sharing ideas: Evaluation or criticism is not welcome. In the second part, the group looks back at the ideas they have created and decides which are worth pursuing. Try this method to see how it works for your group.
• Use nonverbal communication to make others feel comfortable as they talk. Look at the person speaking. Show that you are open to new ideas. Emphasize a positive attitude.
• Allow time for taking notes.
• Encourage everyone to participate and give everyone time to speak. Don’t interrupt.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. How did brainstorming affect your own thinking? How did it affect your participation in the group?

2. How did others in the group respond to the brainstorming?

3. What is the advantage of sharing ideas—rather than evaluating them—during the early part of a brainstorming session?
Activity
Meet in a group of five students. Brainstorm possible topics to discuss in a meeting. Choose a topic that can lead to group action, such as planning a class party, deciding how to encourage environmental awareness at school, or choosing a place to visit on a field trip. Also choose a group leader and a recorder.

The leader calls the meeting to order and keeps the discussion organized and focused on the topic. Everyone should listen as the leader states the topic to be discussed. Anyone who wants to speak for or against an idea should first be recognized by the leader. After discussion, the group may want to vote on a final decision or plan. The recorder should then read the summary of the meeting.

Discuss what worked about the meeting and what could have gone better. Switch roles and continue until everyone has served as leader and recorder.

Tips
- Everyone should participate in a meeting. Listen, speak, and (if the group chooses) vote.
- Ask the leader for permission to speak. Don’t interrupt. Address everyone in the group and make eye contact. Limit your comments to the subject being discussed.
- The leader must allow everyone to speak. He or she should guide the group fairly and listen carefully.
- The recorder takes notes to show what the group decides.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. What did you try to accomplish as a group leader? As a participant?

2. What leadership qualities did other group members show?

3. What strategies can be used in a group meeting to involve everyone, control conflict, and reach an agreement?
Activity
Listen as your teacher plays a tape of a political debate. Notice what the speakers do to make their points convincing. Also listen for weaknesses in speaking and thinking that the speakers display. Discuss your observations with the class.

Working with a partner, find an issue that you disagree on. It might relate to the rules of your school or to an event in your community. Discuss your different views in a clear, reasonable, and respectful way. Then, working alone, decide how to use evidence to support your ideas. Gather information and outline your strategy. Practice your presentation. Speak clearly, and organize your points persuasively. Maintain eye contact with your audience and show confidence in your ideas.

Tips
- Debating is more than just expressing an opinion. Effective debaters prove a point by using evidence and leading listeners to accept their views.
- Research will provide facts, quotations, and examples to support your views—and to argue against your opponent’s views.
- Control your emotions and your tone. Speak forcefully but sound reasonable. A know-it-all voice may turn off listeners. So might an angry attack. Stick to the issue.
- Listen carefully to the opposing argument. Look for weak evidence, poor generalizations, and overlooked points to use in your reply.

Questions for Response or Discussion
1. How difficult was it to explain your position? Did you need more facts to back up your views?

2. What speaking and thinking strategies did your partner use to argue his or her position?

3. Why is it important to concentrate on both listening and speaking in a debate?