



# Possible Futures at Home

## The Benefits of Possible Futures and Early Career Exploration

[Possible Futures](#) is JFF's age-appropriate, academically rigorous career exploration program for students in grades 6 through 10. It is never too early for young people to start learning about careers and discovering their own interests. This puts youth on track to make informed and meaningful decisions about their future careers and develop the skills that will help them achieve their goals.

**These lessons were specifically designed for students to complete at home with minimal support from parents and guardians to support remote academic and career-focused learning.**

Start by reading the guiding question, learning targets, and agenda with your student. Then have your student follow the directions for each activity. Any worksheets that are referenced are included at the end of this lesson; if possible, it may be helpful to print the worksheets.

## The Importance of Communication Skills

Strong communication skills are key for young people to succeed at every level of their education and in their future careers. Employers list strong written and verbal communications skills in the [top five most important skills](#) for employees.

The five lessons in this mini unit will help your student develop in-demand communication skills that will help them advance in their future education and careers.

# Communication Lesson 1: What is Communication?

## Lesson Overview

In this lesson, you will learn about effective communication. You will complete a brainstorm about ways you communicate and then learn about communication skills and barriers. You will also reflect on a personal communication problem or challenge you have experienced and how you can improve on it in the future.

**Guiding Question:** *Why is communication important?*

## Learning Targets

- Identify the components of communication
- Illustrate your understanding of communication with an example from your own life

## Agenda

Activity	Activity Time
Brainstorm: Ways You Communicate	3 minutes
Watch and Write 1: Communication Skills	10 minutes
Watch and Write 2: Communication Barriers	10 minutes

## Brainstorm: Ways You Communicate (3 minutes)

Brainstorm the ways you communicate with the world around you. Write down least two ways you communicate in each of the following categories:

- Visual: things you/others can *see*
- Auditory: things you/others can *hear*
- Tactile: things you/others can *feel*
- Olfactory: things you/others can *smell*

## Watch and Write 1: Communication Skills (10 minutes)

Watch this video: [Understanding Communication Skills](#). While you watch, complete “The Communication Process” graphic organizer, including an example of each skill from your own life.

## Watch and Write 2: Communication Barriers (10 minutes)

Watch this video: [10 Barriers to Effective Communication](#).

Then, choose **one of the barriers** from the video and describe a communication problem or challenge you have personally experienced related to that barrier, answering the following questions:

- What happened?
- What was the problem? What were the barriers?
- What could you do differently next time for more effective communication?

# The Communication Process Graphic Organizer

What is communication?






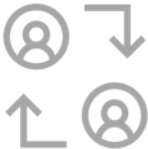

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Component	Meaning	Example
Source		
Encoding		
Channel		
Decoding		
Receiver		
Feedback		
Context		

# Communication Lesson 2: Building Meaning Together

## Lesson Overview

In this lesson, you will add to your understanding of communication and how it can be used to build meaning with others.

**Guiding Question:** *How can communication be used to build meaning together?*

## Learning Targets

- Use art to reflect on building meaning

## Agenda

Activity	Activity Time
Watch and Draw: Exquisite Corpse Drawing Game	10 minutes
Watch: Exquisite Corpse Video	5 minutes
Writing Reflection	10 minutes

## Watch and Draw: Exquisite Corpse Drawing Game (10 minutes)

Watch this video that explains how to play the game: [Exquisite Corpse Game](#).

Then, play the game in-person with a family member or other adult OR digitally, as explained in the video. Hold onto your final drawing, you will reflect on it later during this lesson.

## Watch: Exquisite Corpse Video (5 minutes)

Watch this video: [Exquisite Corpse | Hugo Crosthwaite | The Art Assignment](#)

While you watch, listen for words that Hugo Crosthwaite uses to describe how he makes meaning with other artists.

## Writing Reflection (10 minutes)

Communication is creating meaning with others. Reflect on that idea by answering the following questions:

- What did you like about the Exquisite Corps game?
- How was your final drawing similar to or different from what you imagined?
- What did the game teach you about making meaning with other people?

# Communication Lesson 3: Body Language

## Lesson Overview

In this lesson, you will learn about the importance of nonverbal communication and evaluating body language. Start by reading the guiding question, learning targets, and agenda. Then follow the directions for each activity.

**Guiding Question:** *What speaks louder than words?*

## Learning Targets

- Identify the importance of nonverbal language in communication
- Evaluate images for types of messages projected through body language

## Agenda

Activity	Activity Time
Read and Write: Body Language Notes	10 minutes
Look and Write: Body Language Images	10 minutes
Watch and Write: Body Language TED Talk	10 minutes

## Read and Write: Body Language Notes (10 minutes)

Read the “Body Language Notes” worksheet. Choose one example and pretend you are the person telling this to a friend or someone you know. Describe what your body language would look like in that situation. Include:

- Facial expression
- Posture or what your body would look like
- Eye contact

## Look and Write: Body Language Images (10 minutes)

Look at the three “Body Language Images.” Choose one and:

- List three words or phrases you would use to describe the person’s energy
- List three words or phrases you would want people to use to describe your energy

## Watch and Write: Body Language TED Talk (10 minutes)

Lastly, watch part of this TED Talk (start at minute 10:24 and watch until the end): [Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are](#).

Then answer the following questions:

- The presenter claims, “Our bodies change our minds.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
- What’s your “power pose”? Describe it, draw it, or take a picture of it.



## Body Language Notes Worksheet

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### **SMS**

Hey Jeremiah, you have been removed from the group chat. You and I have been best friends since day one, but recently, you started hanging with some new people. You have honestly changed, and you're not the same friend I once knew. You used to come by the house every day, but not anymore.

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### **Bike Missing**

Nick, did you use my bike? You think that since you're my little brother, it's fine to take my bike, but it is not. You've broken every nice thing Mom has given you this year already, and it's only May! You don't care about anything, except maybe for your ugly shoes. So, I am going to ransom your shoes until I get my bike back.

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### **Tougher**

Shane, I don't want any drama with you, but you've got this crazy look in your eyes every time you look at me. I know you just moved here a few weeks ago and you're already trying to act tough for your new friends. But, what makes it worse is your new friends; I am not too fond of them either. But this morning, when I was just peacefully eating my breakfast, you put your hands all up in my food. I was sharing it with your sister.

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### **Mentions**

Dear @GCash\_Supreme, I saw that you mentioned me in a tweet. You've been in my mentions all week, and I have to admit at one point it was getting kind of annoying. But I really like the memes and videos you sent me. They were super funny! You have to tell me where you find these. Anyway, I followed you back, so just DM me!

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## Body Language Images



Photos by ETTY FIDELE, Sorin Sirbu, and BBH Singapore on Unsplash

# Communication Lesson 4: Listening to Understand

## Lesson Overview

In this lesson, you will learn about the communication principle of *Listening First to Understand*. You will also be introduced to the *Eight Habits of Highly Successful People* and learn about a strategy called *PAQ* that you can use to Listen First to Understand. Lastly, you will complete an assignment to try out your new understandings.

**Guiding Question:** *How can I get you?*

## Learning Targets

- Use what you learn about the Eight Habits of Successful People and the PAQ strategy to analyze a case study and apply the Listen First to Understand principle to create a win-win solution

## Agenda

Activity	Activity Time
Read and Answer Questions: The 8 Habits of Highly Successful People	10 minutes
Read: PAQ	5 minutes
Read and Answer Questions: Listen First, It Works	10 minutes

## Read and Answer Questions: The 8 Habits of Highly Successful People (10 minutes)

Read the definitions of the “8 Habits of Highly Successful People” from Dr. Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (he later added an eighth habit).

Then, answer the questions on the “8 Habits of Highly Successful People” worksheet.

### Read: PAQ (5 minutes)

The PAQ protocol described below will help you become a more active listener, navigate conflict, and listen first to understand before trying to be understood. You need to think like an explorer. The idea is to try to explore what the other person is thinking and feeling using the three components of PAQ:

**Paraphrase:** Repeat the gist of the story as you understood it, looking for confirmation and correction if necessary. (You’ll do this while reading a case study during the next activity.)

**Acknowledge:** Validate the speaker’s feelings by listening empathetically and trying to put yourself in their shoes. (Imagine doing this as you read the case study.)

**Question:** Ask relevant and/or clarifying questions or questions that will expand your understanding. Ask yourself, do I really get what the person thinks happened?





## Read and Answer Questions: Listen First, It Works (10 minutes)

Using what you read about the 8 Habits and the PAQ strategy, choose one of the two case studies below and use the “Listen First, It Works” graphic organizer to answer the following and create a win-win solution.





- Who is seeking to be understood?
- Who should try to understand? What PAQ strategies could they have used to understand? (Paraphrase / Acknowledge / Question)
- How could this end in a win-win situation?

## The 8 Habits of Highly Successful People

### Definitions

Habit	Definition
<p><b>Be Proactive</b></p> 	<p>In life, there are things that we can change—these fall within our Circle of Influence. Then, there are things that require us to change—these fall within our Circle of Concern. Work on the things that you can influence or change, and constantly work to expand what’s inside your circle. Don't sit and wait for things that concern you; act on things before problems happen (Circle of Concern).</p>
<p><b>Put First Things First</b></p> 	<p>Everyone can't accomplish everything all at once. To be successful, it's important to prioritize things. Priority should be given in the following order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Important and Urgent</li> <li>2. Important and Not Urgent</li> <li>3. Not Important and Urgent</li> <li>4. Not Important and Not Urgent</li> </ol>
<p><b>Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood</b></p> 	<p>Using empathetic listening to understand someone makes them want to listen to you instead. Trying to put yourself in their shoes creates an atmosphere of caring, positivity, and problem solving.</p>
<p><b>Sharpen the Saw</b></p> 	<p>It is important to live a balanced lifestyle with time for exercise, work, and reflection, as well as time with friends and family, and time to give back to your community. Balancing these things will ensure that you have enough energy and good physical, emotional, and social health to live a sustained, long-term, effective lifestyle.</p>

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<p><b>Begin With the End in Mind</b></p> 	<p>By thinking about what you want in the future, you are able to plan for it. This could be any kind of goal, from running a marathon to being an astronaut, starting your own business to being a better friend. This will help you make decisions along the way by asking “Will this get me closer to my goal?” This will ensure you are always directing your energy toward your goal and avoiding spending energy going down paths that waste energy and take you away from your objective.</p>
<p><b>Think Win-Win</b></p> 	<p>Oftentimes, we think of the solution to problems as a zero-sum game—I WIN: YOU LOSE or YOU WIN: I LOSE. However, there is often an opportunity to create a mutually beneficial solution—I WIN: YOU WIN! Win-win solutions are better long-term solutions because both people feel good about the outcome. Creating a win-win solution isn’t about being nice, though, and they often aren’t the easiest solutions. They take time to discuss and create, and they require value, respect, and understanding.</p>
<p><b>Synergize</b></p> 	<p>Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. Working together as a team to achieve a goal means that one person’s strengths balance another’s weakness. From working together, everyone has the opportunity to strengthen their own areas of weakness by working and learning from one another.</p>
<p><b>Find Your Voice and Help Others Find Theirs</b></p> 	<p>This isn’t about talking, singing, or rapping. It’s about finding what makes you unique, significant, and important. Your voice is the way you positively contribute to a situation. Helping others find their voice means helping them see how they are unique, significant, and important and how they can positively contribute to a situation.</p>

# The 8 Habits of Highly Successful People

## Worksheet

Pick one of the eight habits that you think you already have, or that you would like to have, and answer the following questions.

Habit: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the habit in your own words.

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How does it help with collaboration and communication?

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Give an example of a time this habit helped with communication. It can be from your own life or elsewhere.

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## Case Studies

### I Wasn't Fighting

Standing at my open locker door, I forgot what I was looking for. I overheard Michael jawing at that tall kid from my science class. I didn't know what he was upset about. The two of them started pushing and shoving each other, chest to chest. Mike swings on him. It didn't really phase me because I see this soft kind of fighting all the time; I was just watching, nothing serious really to get amped up about. But then, Mike gets on top of the other kid and starts whaling on him, and he looks like he's getting hurt really bad. I thought Mike was going to kill him, so I jumped in there to stop this ruthless beating.

Ms. Parrilla came running in, yelling at us to stop cause that kid's face was a mess. She assumed I was involved in the fight, rather than me trying to spare that kid from getting his head bounced off the floor. Ms. Parrilla started talking to me like I was some type of criminal, dragging us both down to the principal's office. I was trying to explain to her that I was breaking it up, but she just continued yelling, shutting me down for trying to speak. So, I ripped my hand away from her grip and yelled right back.

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### Honestly, I Didn't Believe You

Mr. Katz's class isn't much fun, and he has been dealing with students leaving class to go to the bathroom. They usually don't come right back and end up hanging out in the hallways when they should be back in class. Recently, some students have even vandalized a couple of bathrooms and disrupted other classes. This is a trend across all Mr. Katz's classes, but it's also starting in other teachers' classes too. The principal has noticed and made a new policy that permits detention for students that don't come right back to class. Mr. Katz informs us that he will give detention to any student that takes longer than five minutes to go to the bathroom.

The next week, I ask to go to the bathroom; my stomach is killing me, and I think I ate some bad food last night. After I go to the bathroom, I go to the nurse for some TUMS and then head back to class. When I get back, Mr. Katz says I took six minutes and hands me a detention slip. I'm furious and hurt and try to explain that I went to the nurse, but he tells me that "rules are rules" and if I needed to go to the nurse, I should have come back to get another pass. He clearly thinks I was hanging out in the hallway and doesn't believe me. I try again to tell him that I went to the nurse, but Mr. Katz isn't listening. He and I go back and forth until he threatens to send me to the principal's office. I shut up and sit down, but I'm really mad at Mr. Katz.



## Listen First, It Works Graphic Organizer

<p><b>Who is seeking to be understood?</b></p> 	<p><b>Who should try to understand?</b></p> 
<p><b>What PAQ strategies could they have used to understand? ( Paraphrase / Acknowledge / Question )</b></p>	
<p><b>How could this end in a win-win situation?</b></p> 	

# Communication Lesson 5: Communication Skills that Pay the Bills

## Lesson Overview

This lesson is about the importance of strong communication skills in the workplace. You will solidify your new learning by providing your future self with some advice to help you succeed in your first job.

**Guiding Question:** *What skills will make me employee of the month?*

## Learning Targets

- Identify the economic benefits of having strong communication skills
- Evaluate the actions of an employee and create alternatives
- Describe actions that will make me an outstanding employee in my first job

## Agenda

Activity	Activity Time
Read, Rank, and Reflect: Communication Skills that Pay the Bills	10 minutes
Watch: Perception Is Everything	5 minutes
Read and Answer: Scenarios	10 minutes
Write: Employee of the Month	10 minutes

## **Read, Rank, and Reflect: Communication Skills that Pay the Bills (10 minutes)**

Read this brief excerpt from an article on what skills employers want by Susan Adams, Forbes Magazine education reporter:

Can you work well on a team, make decisions and solve problems? Those are the skills employers most want when they are deciding which new college graduates to hire. The next-most-important skill: ability to communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization. Employers also want new hires to have technical knowledge related to the job, but that's not nearly as important as good teamwork, decision-making and communication skills, and the ability to plan and prioritize work.

After reading the excerpt above, complete the “Communication Skills Ranking Worksheet.”

## **Watch: Perception Is Everything (5 minutes)**

It's important to know that good communication skills matter to employers—and are therefore necessary—skills to pay the bills. You will look at scenarios in the workplace through the eyes of the employee and the employer. Then, you will think about what the employee might do differently.

Watch the “[Soft Skills Communication](#)” video.

Ask yourself:

- What was the employee thinking?
- What might the employer think of the situation?
- What could or did the employee change to be more successful?

## **Read and Answer: Scenarios (10 minutes)**

Read the three scenarios below. Pick one scenario and answer the following questions:

- What was the employee thinking?
- What might the employer think of the situation?
- What could or did the employee change to be more successful?

**Scenarios:*****Dress Code***

Samantha is wearing her favorite red sneakers to work today. The dress code for all Red Panda employees is to wear only white or black non-slip shoes during their shifts. Samantha's manager notices that she is not wearing shoes that meet the dress code and sends her home.

***Belt Holster***

Dennis just got a new phone case that came with a belt holster for easy access. Dennis keeps his phone on him all the time because his little brother has been sick, and he's worried about him. Even on the job, his phone is on his hip. As it flashes and rings for every new notification, he stops frequently to check his phone. Working in the backend of the store, doing inventory and shelving of heavy boxes, Dennis doesn't have to worry about customers all too much. However, the backend supervisor has asked Dennis to leave his phone in his car.

***One Pound of Distraction***

Austin loves his job at the supermarket deli and gets along with his coworkers very well. Several times during his shift, Austin tells his coworkers jokes and stories that really brighten the mood, but really only for those on one side of the counter. This really slows down production, causing long lines and extended wait times for frustrated customers.

**Write: Employee of the Month (10 minutes)**

Write down two pieces of advice that can you give to help your future self to help you succeed in a new job. Explain why those two pieces of advice are important and how they can help.

## Communication Skills Ranking Worksheet

**Directions:** Rank the following skills from 1 to 10 (1 being most important and 10 being least important). There are no wrong answers.

Communication Skill	Rank
I can leave a record for the next shift of what I've done and what still needs to be done.	
I know how to count back change and figure out a discount.	
I know what needs to be done and what is most important to do first.	
If I don't know something, I know how to find the answer.	
I can use the cash register or point of sale machine.	
I know how to perform all the tasks at my job.	
When something goes wrong, I know how to solve the problem.	
I am friendly with customers and other staff.	
I am good at convincing others what they should buy.	
I work well with others and am a team player.	

After completing your rankings above, briefly explain your choice for the #1 most important skill. Why do you think it's the most important? Remember, there are no wrong answers!

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