

Lesson Goals, Lesson Plan and Havruta Guided Questions

Lesson Goals

When I introduce a havruta practice, I have a number of goals: to define the practice in students' own language, to model the practice, and to give students an opportunity to rehearse the skills associated with it and reflect on what they do. The two main havruta practices that I teach my students are active listening and respectful challenging. Below, I describe the beginning process for teaching active listening.

My goal for this lesson is for students to begin to understand what “active listening” means.

After exploring as a class what it means to be an active person, I begin to challenge the students to think about what it means to be an “active listener.” They determine that active listening includes your body postures, eye contact, and other non-verbal cues. Then the students split into havruta to try to grapple with these ideas and articulate what active listening will look like, sound like, and feel like in our classroom.

I believe that in order for students to truly work together in either pairs or groups, they need to understand what good listening means and looks like in practice. Students cannot just “hear” what is being said, but instead, they need to process and consider the ideas being shared or questions being asked.

At the third-grade level, students can begin to practice active listening and reflect on their successes and challenges. Giving the students a single specific skill set to focus on, coupled with an engaging and well-planned assignment to do with their havruta, enables them to rehearse the skills in an authentic way. While the students discuss their ideas about “active listening,” they also practice the set of skills itself. I purposely create opportunities where the students are not just talking about what it means to actively listen but are practicing, reflecting upon, and seeking to improve this practice.

Havruta Practices Lesson: March 30, 2009

Lesson: Active Listening

Goals: To understand what Active Listening means

Activity #1: Teacher asks the whole class the following questions and engages in discussion about them:

- What does it mean to be an active person?
- What do you think it means to be an active speaker?
- What would that look like and sound like?
- Now what do you think it means to be an active listener? What parts of listening are active?
- How is your body active or how would you sit? (sitting close to your partner and facing your partner) Your hands? (gestures) Your head? (nodding)

Sample body cues: Nodding, shaking your head, squinting your eyes, sitting close etc. are all non-verbal cues that show your partner that you are doing active listening. (Have a student model this.)

- How could you actively show that you are listening with what you say? Let's write down some sentences that we could say that would show we are actively listening.

Sample sentences: "Uh huh," "Yes, I understand," and "Can you explain that in another way?"

- What is the difference between listening and hearing?

Sample response: With listening you have to think about what someone is saying; with hearing, you could be hearing the words but not thinking about them.

Activity #2: Students study in havruta

- Split students into *havrutot* while singing *V'ha'er eynaynu*. (This is a previously learned ritual song for transitioning into.)
- Students use accompanying student sheet to explore Active Listening (see sheet below, "What Does It Mean To Listen?").

Activity #3: Teacher leads students in composing an active listening chart

- Signal students to return to regular desks with verbal cue of "Return, reflecting havrutot." (Students put away materials and return desks to original spots.)
- Draw the outline of an active listening chart on the board (see Active Listening chart with three columns of "looks like, sounds like and feels like").
- Ask students: What does active listening look like, sound like and feel like?
- Fill in the chart based on their responses.

Activity #4: Teacher wraps up the lesson by raising and discussing the following questions and statements:

- If you are good at active listening, how can that skill help you to be successful this year as a student and as a friend?
- How can that skill help you in group work?
- How can that skill help you in havruta text study?
- We are going to be working on this practice the whole year and reflecting on how we are doing with active listening.

Name: _____

Date: _____



Havruta Guided Questions: What Does It Mean To Listen?

1. What does good listening look like? And why?
2. What does good listening sound like?
3. What does good listening feel like?
4. What do you think active listening means?