

# GoodCharacter.com Monthly Newsletter

Presented by [Live Wire Media](#)

Volume 5, Issue 1: September 2011



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## Theme of the Month: Listening and Communication

How well do you listen to others? How do you deal with students who don't listen to you or to their classmates? Good listening habits enable students to be more effective learners. And listening is also an important part of respect. Active listening helps us live in harmony with others.

The beginning of the school year is an ideal time to work with students on their listening skills, because it can make the coming year a good deal more productive for everyone. The lesson plans and resources in this newsletter are aimed at helping you teach your students to become better listeners, better able to communicate with you, as well as with each other.

A good example of the importance of listening is portrayed in the [Live Wire Media](#) video production, "Groark Learns to Listen." In this humorous and insightful video for grades K-3, Groark (pictured on the right interrupting his friend Nubbs) gets a powerful dose of what can happen when he doesn't pay attention when others are speaking to him. You can take a peek at this fun little teaching tool by visiting [our discussion guide](#). (And, yes, we produced it.)

Welcome back, and have a wonderful school year. You hear what we're saying?

Freddy Sweet, Ph.D. and David Elkind  
Co-Presidents  
Live Wire Media



*"Oh, listen a lot and talk less. You can't learn anything when you're talking."*  
- Bing Crosby

## Lesson Plans and Activities

### Elementary School

In this YouTube video, "[Getting Your Child to Listen](#)," Dr. Ann Corwin advises us adults how not to support kids' poor listening patterns.

In many ways paying attention is synonymous with listening. Here are some fun, and sometimes silly, [games that require kids to concentrate on what they are hearing](#).

Using active listening skills, students learn to recognize how they can tell when people are listening to them. Students [learn active listening techniques, and practice them](#) by listening to, and then paraphrasing, a classmate's story.

### Middle School

Here are several [lesson plans on listening and communication](#) that also challenge students' critical thinking skills. (PDF)

In [this exercise](#) one student describes a picture while the other draws it – it's harder than it sounds! "This activity is excellent for developing students' communication skills; it demonstrates the importance of listening and asking the right questions (inquiry skills)."

This listening lesson teaches students to understand the [difference between facts and opinions](#).

This conflict resolution website has a great set of [lessons on effective communication](#).

### High School

The activities in this lesson teach students about [how their ears work](#), and warn them about the dangers of loud noises, including music.

[These tips](#) will help you show teens that you are really are listening to what they're saying.

*"Listening looks easy, but it's not simple. Every head is a world."*  
- Cuban Proverb

## In the News

Which is more distracting: listening to music, or talking on the phone? Here's some [controversial research](#) about listening, and the devices that prevent it.

This research study links to a video backing up the claim that "[listening to music while crossing the street is risky](#)."

A mom writes, "I feel like my 9-year-old son literally does not hear me when I speak to him." The [advice](#) given to her by this columnist is useful for teachers, too.

Leave it to Homer Simpson to discover the negative side of listening:  
*"Marge, it takes two to lie. One to lie and one to listen."*  
- Homer Simpson

## Tips and Resources

Visit the website of the International Listening Association at [www.listen.org](#).

A [debate-based activity](#) encourages students to speak, listen, and paraphrase what they've heard. This activity is great for engaging kids of all ages.

Lists are often very effective ways of introducing a skill. Here is a list of [10 Tips for Active Listening](#).

Here are [even more tips](#) on helping students to improve their listening skills.

Listening is especially important for [taking notes in class](#). Dartmouth's Academic Skill Center has information on active listening, note taking, and studying for success.

*"Only when the clamor of the outside world is silenced will you be able to hear the deeper vibration. Listen carefully."*  
- Sarah Ban Breathnach

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