

## Active Listening Lesson

### Learning Target

The student will demonstrate active listening skills to fully engage in music listening.

### Lesson Plan

**Time for lesson:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** white board and markers  
Questions written on board: What do you like about the music?  
How does the music make you feel?  
Musical selection (audio **and** visual)  
*Suggested:* 2020 concert selection:  
Beethoven, Symphony No. 8, mvt. 2  
OR  
Mussorgsky, Night on Bald Mountain  
OR  
Heitzeg's *Nomade*

**Prepare:** Cue up music and YouTube/video clip  
(video clips are provided with the online teacher resources"  
  
Write two questions on board

**Note to teacher:** *Active listening* is a skill that is used in counseling, job training and in solving conflicts. It demands that the listener completely **concentrate on, think about, respond to and remember** that to which they are listening. It is the opposite of *passive hearing*, or the biological response of the inner ear to sound waves as we are think or do other things.

### Lesson Plan

#### Warmup:

*Teacher instructions to students:*

"When we listen to someone talk, we want to concentrate on what they're saying and give them our complete attention. This is called **active listening**. If we pay attention to the person who is speaking and think about what we are hearing, we are better able to understand them and what they are saying."

#### Direct Instruction:

"*Active listening* means that you show good listening habits. Let's list some things that good listeners do."

Students share examples that are listed on the board. Refine to these:

- Look at the speaker
- Sit still
- Be silent
- Interested body position (leaning forward to show interest, smile, eye contact)

Ask students for non-examples (things you would NOT do as an active listener):

- Not looking at the speaker
- Interrupting
- Making noise
- Fidgeting

**Guided practice:** Students will practice active listening skills with a partner. Pair up.

Instructions: *Poor listening skills*

1. Person with the darkest colored clothes starts first.  
- Speaker talks about their favorite music or instrument and why they like it. *One minute to talk.*
2. Listener demonstrates poor listening skills  
- don't look at the speaker, interrupt them, sigh with boredom, fidget
3. Whole group questions:  
Speaker: How did their behavior make you feel?  
Listener: Were you able to concentrate on what they were saying?

*Good listening skills*

Switch parts.

1. Speaker talks about their favorite music or instrument for *one minute.*
2. Listener makes eye contact, is still and silent, nods or smiles at the right time.
3. Whole group questions:  
**Speaker:** How did their behavior make you feel?  
**Listener:** Were you able to concentrate on what they were saying?

**Independent practice:**

"We will be going to a concert by the Des Moines Symphony. *Active listening* will be important so we can concentrate on and enjoy what we are hearing. By using good listening skills, we will better understand the music and have a more meaningful experience at the concert."

"To be able to completely concentrate on this music, find a **comfortable** position for your body.  
(pause)

**Relax** your muscles." (pause)

"**Breathe** in through your nose, out through your mouth." (pause)

"Because we can't see the performers right now,

**Close your eyes** so you aren't distracted by looking at things in the room." (pause)

**Question: What do you like about the music?**

Play 3 minutes of music.

Turn to a neighbor; take turns answering the question, using *active listening*.

**Question: How does the music make you feel?**

Play the music again for 3 minutes as students relax and breathe.

Have students walk around the room silently as the music continues.

Stop the music. "High five someone close to you. Take turns answering the question using *active listening*."

**Assessment:**

**Informal**

"Can you show me the skills of an *active listener*? Let's watch musicians perform this music and you will show me that you are paying attention and thinking about the music."

Show a video clip or YouTube of the music to which the students have been listening.

Observe *active listening* skills.

**Resources:**

“Active Listening.” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active\\_listening](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active_listening)

Cuncic, Arlin. “How to Practice Active Listening.” *Verywellmind*.  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-active-listening-3024343>

Kagan, S. *Kagan Structures: A Miracle of Active Engagement*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing. *Kagan Online Magazine*, Fall/Winter 2009. [www.KaganOnline.com](http://www.KaganOnline.com)

“What is Active Listening?” United States Institute of Peace. <https://www.usip.org/public-education/educators/what-active-listening>