

# Activity Guide: *Listening Sessions*

Time frame: 30 mins

## Summary

Students share from a prompt with a partner. While one person is sharing, the other is only listening. This activity hones listening skills and invites students to share without fear of interruption.

### Purpose

Listening is foundational to productive and meaningful dialogue experiences. Like anything else, deep listening requires practice.

### Outcomes

Students will:

- Develop and practice active listening skills
- Share personal insights or experiences with a partner and discover something new about them

## Detailed Agenda

### Framing

*“For this activity, you will share your answer to a prompt with your partner for 2 minutes. While you are sharing, your partner is only listening. After the 2 minutes are up, the listener can ask constructive questions to learn more. Then we’ll switch.”*

### Part 1: Silent Thinking

1. Students should be given a list of prompts to choose from. Prompts should be accessible to all experiences, open-ended, and invite personal sharing.
2. Give 2-3 minutes for reflection or note-taking.
3. Embrace imperfection—polished responses aren’t necessary, and students should feel welcome to speak in a stream of consciousness.

### Prompt Options for Listening Sessions

- Share about an issue you care about. Why do you care so much about it? Where did you learn it? Have you ever been challenged on it?
- Talk about a time you made a difficult decision. What made it hard? How did you navigate it? What was the outcome?
- Share about a time you changed your mind. What sparked it? How did it feel?
- Share about a value that guides your decisions. Where did this value come from? Has it ever been tested or challenged?
- Share about a time you stepped outside your comfort zone. What motivated you? How did it feel before, during, and after?
- Talk about a time you navigated a disagreement with someone you respect. How did you handle it? What did you take away from the experience?

## Part 2: Activity

Instructions for pairs:

- **Person 1:** Share your response to your prompt of choice for 2 minutes.
- **Person 2:** Just listen, without responding. After 2 minutes, ask constructive questions to learn more. Examples below. Q&As should be another 2 minutes.
- Switch roles.

### Examples of Constructive Questions

- What makes you say that?
- Why is that issue so important to you?
- Is there a person or experience you've had that influenced your belief?
- Can you say more about what you mean when you say \_\_\_\_\_?
- Why do you think that is?
- Have you always felt that way?

## Wrap-Up

### Debrief Questions

Have students share in small groups or the full group:

- What did you notice during this activity?
- How did it feel as the speaker? As the listener?
- What surprised you?
- Did the time feel short or long?
- Did you get asked any questions you particularly appreciated?