

Active Listening Activity

Grade Level: All

Time: 30 min.

Purpose: To help students practice active listening, and to discuss and debate without getting personal.

Procedure:

Put the students into groups of three:

- 1) One person states her or his views on a controversial subject for about three minutes (ideally about the selected PA issue).
- 2) The second person listens, takes notes, and then summarizes out loud what was said.
- 3) The third person evaluates the second person's listening skills to see how close the summary came to what was originally said.

Switch off so everyone in the group has a chance to play each role, and use a new question for each round.

Follow up questions:

- Were there conflicts between people's public and private views? How could you tell?
- Did stories that people told from their own experience give them more authority, or did they weaken people's arguments?
- Did how they told their story matter?
- Can someone who did not actually put the ideas together report what "actually" got said?
- Are people's own interpretations the only thing that can come from a summary?