



Having a Conversation

Communication is an integral part of the school day. Students must know how to talk to each other, to teachers, to lunchroom workers, and to anyone else who may be in the school. Teaching students the skill of “Having a Conversation” will prepare them for those times when they must communicate verbally.

One difficulty that many students have when talking to someone is not allowing the other person to finish what he or she is saying. Students sometimes interrupt as soon as they think they know what the other person is going to say. They get used to jumping right into the conversation with their friends or family members and don't think about how rude that behavior is. It is important for students to learn to listen and wait for their turn to speak.

The goal of the lesson is to teach students the appropriate behavioral expectations for the skill of “Having a Conversation.”

The objectives of the lesson for students include:

- learning the steps of the skill of “Having a Conversation.”
- practicing the skill.
- generalizing the use of the skill to different places and different people.

Introduce the Skill

Ask the students to brainstorm about times when they had what they consider to be an appropriate conversation with someone and times when they interrupted another person while he or she was talking. Have students discuss how an appropriate conversation should sound.

Describe the Appropriate Behavior

Provide students with the behavioral steps for the skill of “Having a Conversation.”

NOTE: Steps can be posted on a bulletin board or shown on an overhead, etc. Please adapt the steps to fit your expectations and the needs of your students.

SAY: “Here are the steps of the skill of ‘Having a Conversation.’”

1. **Look at the person.**
2. **Use a pleasant voice.**
3. **Listen to what the other person says.**
4. **When there is a break in the conversation, ask a question or share your thoughts.**

SAY: “These are the steps we are going to use for the skill of ‘Having a Conversation’ in this class and building.”

Give a Reason

Ask the students to provide reasons for why they think it might be important to have a conversation using these steps. Here are some examples of reasons to use in case students have difficulty thinking of ones on their own:

- Other people are more likely to want to talk with you.
- You are more likely to clearly let another person know what you think about a subject, and are more likely to understand what the other person thinks about the subject.
- Others will know that you won’t try to dominate a conversation.
- You won’t interrupt others who are trying to share an idea or story.
- You might learn something by listening to what the other person is saying.
- You show respect to others by letting them finish before you speak.

Practice

Choose one or more of the following activities to complete your lesson by allowing the students to practice the skill.

1. Have students tell their partner the steps of the skill.
2. **Journaling ideas**
 - Ask students to describe a time when they had a pleasant conversation with someone. What was the outcome?

- Ask students to describe a time when they “hogged” a conversation with someone. What was the outcome?
 - Ask students to describe a time when talked very little during a conversation. How did the other person feel? What was the outcome?
 - Ask students to describe a time when they didn’t let someone finish his or her part of the conversation so they did not have all the information they needed to complete a task.
 - Ask students to describe a time when they didn’t allow someone to finish what he or she was saying and hurt that person’s feelings.
 - Ask students to describe a time when they used a loud voice during a conversation and someone overheard them.
3. **Class discussion and role-play:** Talk with students about different situations where they can or may have to have appropriate conversations. Use the following role-play scenarios to have students model appropriate conversations in specific situations.
- Your teacher asks you to stay after class to discuss an assignment that you haven’t turned in.
 - A friend wants to talk to you in the hallway about some questions on a math assignment.
 - The teacher asks you to work in groups and discuss a particular topic in class.
 - Students are taking a test. When you finish, you are allowed to move to the back of the room and work quietly with another student who also has completed the test.
 - The teacher is working with reading groups. Other students who are not in the groups are allowed to work on other assignments as a group.
 - You go into the lunchroom to eat. A teacher is conducting class at the other end of the lunchroom.
- SAY:** “Thank you for completing the practice activity. We will continue to discuss the skill of ‘Having a Conversation’ for the rest of the week.”
- NOTE:** Each day of the week, review the steps of the skill, discuss why it is important to use the skill, and practice when possible.

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