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• grades k-4 •



listening and speaking



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In this excerpt from *Simply Stations: Listening and Speaking*, author Debbie Diller guides teachers on how to transition from whole-group instruction to stations while addressing the Listening & Speaking standard “The student will listen activity & ask questions.” Practical examples and ideas for partner practice at stations are provided for primary grades (K-2) and intermediate grades (3-4).

LEARN MORE about this title, including Features, Table of Contents, and Reviews.

Timeless Listening and Speaking Standard 2

The student will listen actively and ask questions.

Let's examine this timeless standard before we begin teaching and moving it into a Listening and Speaking station. Look closely at your own state standards for specific grade-level expectations and academic vocabulary. By teaching this standard well, children will have a deeper idea of how to listen actively and speak or respond by asking questions when they hear or (eventually) read literary or informational text on their own. By practicing at a Listening and Speaking station, learners will have the opportunity to hear a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction over time and practice asking questions of each other about what they hear.

What It Is

- Hearing is a physical act; listening is a mental act.
- As we listen, we make meaning of what we hear and choose our response.
- An active listener does the following:
 - Looks at the speaker
 - Focuses on the message being communicated
 - Responds by summarizing or asking a question

Why It's Important

- People have a basic need to be heard/understood.
- When we listen actively, we are better able to understand and respond to people, situations, stories, and/or information.

- Listening comprehension precedes reading comprehension. If a child has trouble inferring about characters when text is read aloud, that student will most likely have difficulty inferring when reading independently.
- Asking questions can clear up confusions and propel readers forward.

Myths and Confusions

- Hearing and listening are not the same thing, but they are connected. Hearing involves sound waves; listening requires concentration. Remove physical distractions by seating children away from noisy HVAC units or windows with street/playground noise.
- Young children often confuse telling and asking. They may want to tell you a story about something when you want them to ask questions.
- Be explicit when teaching students to ask questions. Help them understand *why* we ask questions: to get information, not to *give* it!
- Model how to ask questions and name these as *questions* as you model.



EL TIP: Multilingual students may benefit from additional time at the Listening and Speaking station, especially if they can listen to books from read aloud that are recorded. Repeated listening will help to build language and comprehension.

Real-World Connections

- Active listening is important when interacting with others. Listening and asking questions helps build relationships and enables people to work better together.
- Listening builds language. Young children develop new vocabularies by listening and then trying some of the words they've heard; so do people learning a new language.
- Listening to recorded books or podcasts is a way people enjoy stories and learn new information. Look at the popularity of audiobooks, especially for adults with long commutes!

How Practice at the Listening and Speaking Station Helps Students

- Reminding students to *listen actively* to text and ask questions will build good reading and thinking habits. Listening removes the cognitive load of reading and allows learners to *think and ask questions* as they work at this station.
- Talking about their questions can help learners share and clarify understanding of what they listened to. You might teach younger students to pause the device when a question pops into their minds, so

they can talk about it. Older students can jot down their questions on sticky notes and then talk about them after they have finished listening to the text.

- Thinking and asking questions can help students monitor their comprehension.
- Encourage children to also discuss answers to the questions they had. They may listen again to find answers using text evidence.

It's important to teach concepts well in whole group before moving this work into the Listening and Speaking station. This will help students learn how to practice the same activities with a partner independent of you. Consider these steps for student success with this standard.

1. Plan

Select Picture Books

Because you'll be modeling the listening and speaking work kids will do in the station, think about this standard and the kind of books that will help children understand the skill you're teaching. Choose picture books and articles (print and online versions) that will pique student interest when planning for instruction. Ask for children's input in what they'd like to learn about. They will be more focused (and listen actively) if they have a choice of what they listen to. Use the same types of recorded text at the Listening and Speaking station.

Look for books and articles that meet the following criteria when selecting text for active listening and asking questions.

KINDERGARTEN	GRADES 1–2	GRADES 3–4
<p>Text about experiences related to home or school</p> <p>Books about things young children are naturally curious about (animals, weather, how things work)</p> <p>Informational books about topics of interest to your kids that have lots of photos and not too much text</p>	<p>Books about things your students like to do, such as playing soccer or baseball</p> <p>Texts about topics your students want to know more about (e.g., how things work)</p> <p>Books with covers that might promote questions</p> <p>Informational text with headings in question form</p>	<p>Books about topics of interest to your students</p> <p>Literary texts with interesting characters kids can relate to and might wonder about</p> <p>Informational texts that have questions built into them through headings or other text features</p> <p>Texts that answer students' inquiry/research questions</p>



EL TIP: Answering questions can help multilingual students listen with purpose. As you pair students at the Listening and Speaking station, you might give them roles. A native speaker could be the Questioner who asks questions, and a multilingual student could be the Answerer who answers the questions.



TIME-SAVING TIP:

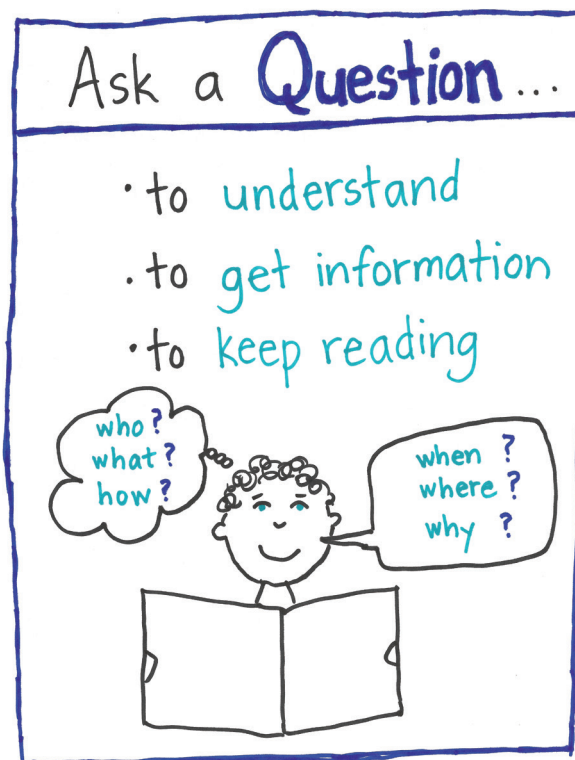
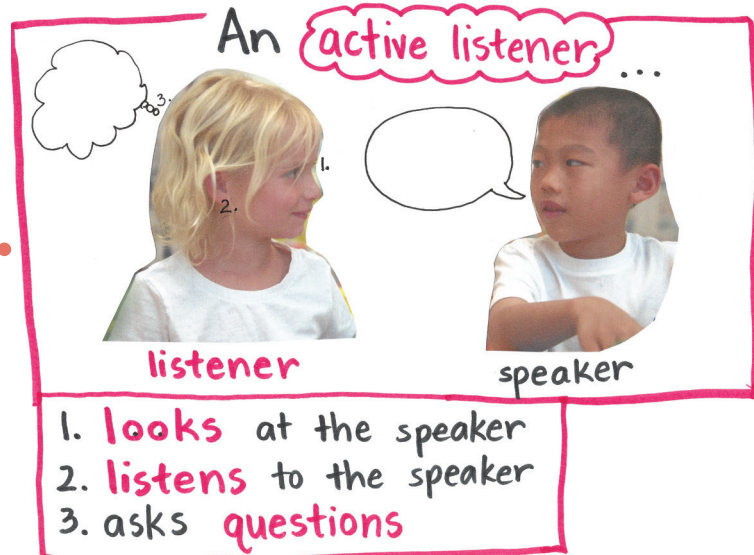
Consider taking a photo of the finished anchor chart, then printing it in a smaller size to post in the Listening and Speaking station.

2. Teach

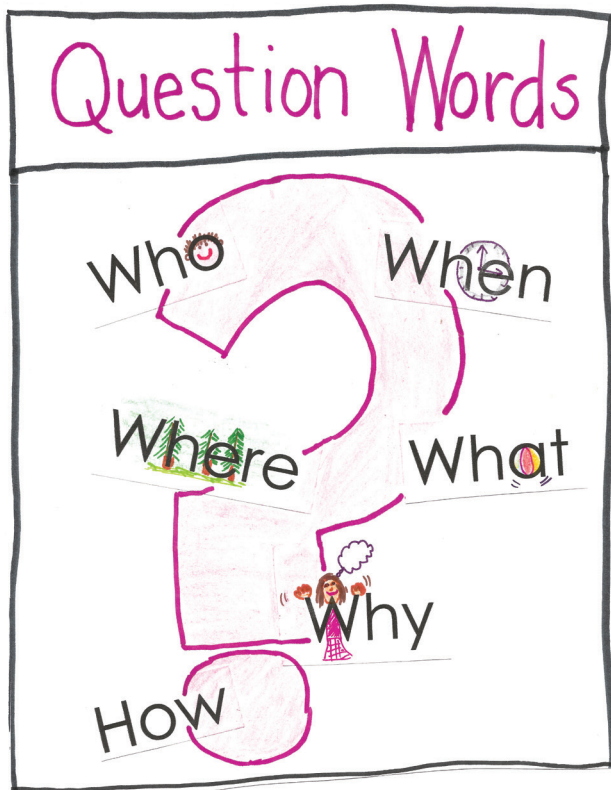
Co-Create Anchor Charts in Whole Group

Make an anchor chart on active listening *with* your class, including one with photos of your students. Label desired behaviors brainstormed with your kids. On another day, make an anchor chart about asking questions, including a list of question words. Post these where children can easily see them during whole group instruction. Review these charts before reading aloud to help children focus their attention. Here are some sample charts for inspiration.

Anchor chart on active listening.



Anchor chart on asking questions.



Anchor chart of question words.

Model How to Listen Actively and Ask Questions

Teach habits for active listening in read aloud and throughout the day. Give feedback directed toward students who are exhibiting active listening. (For example, *Manuel is watching the speaker. He is smiling at the funny parts, so I can tell he is listening.*)

Model how to ask questions at appropriate times during read aloud, such as when looking at the front cover of a book. Show how to read the title, look at illustrations, and ask questions that go with that book. Point to question words on your matching anchor chart as you encourage children to ask questions before, during, and after a read aloud.

I've included sample lessons for modeling at the end of this section to help you get started.

Use Signals to Help Kids Listen Actively

- Teach students how to look at the speaker and listen. To show they are ready to listen, they might point to their eyes and ears.
- They might also put their fingers to their lips to show “no interrupting” when someone is speaking.



EL TIP: Be sure students who are learning English as a new language sit near you when reading aloud (rather than on the outer edges of the group). Including them inside the group will encourage their participation during Turn and Talk time and give them “surround sound” as others share around them.



EL TIP: Be mindful of students who are in the early stages of learning a new language. Encourage them to use nonverbal signals, such as a thumbs up for “I agree” or a shrugging of the shoulders to show “I don’t understand.”

- Remind them to show emotion with their face/body to show they are listening. They might nod their head, smile, or move their body closer as they listen.
- During discussions, you might use hand signals to show active listening. (For example, a thumbs up means “I agree,” or two fingers in the air means “I’d like to restate and add something.”)

Students use thumbs up to show they agree, or they hold two fingers in the air to show, “I’d like to restate and add something.”

Discussion Signals



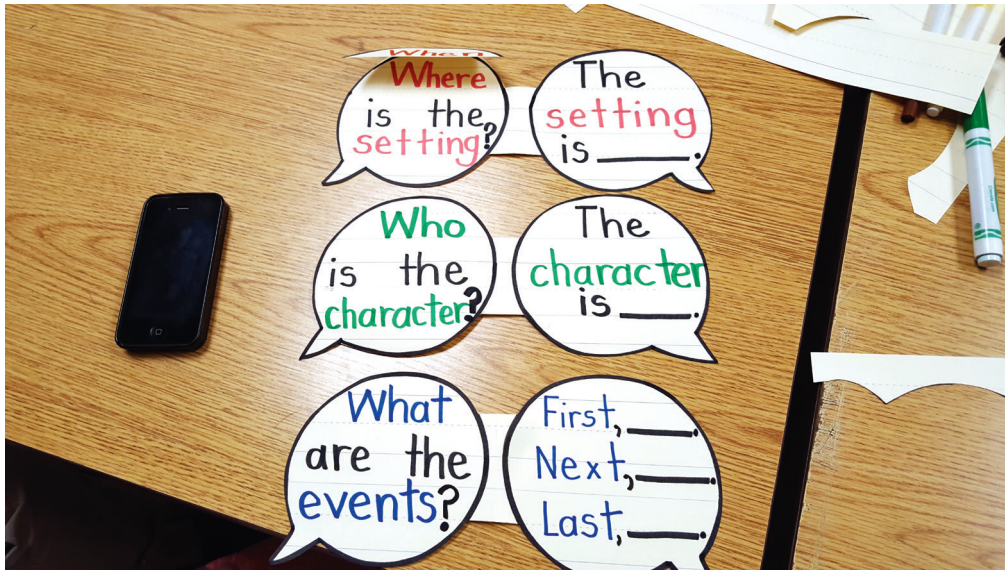
I agree.



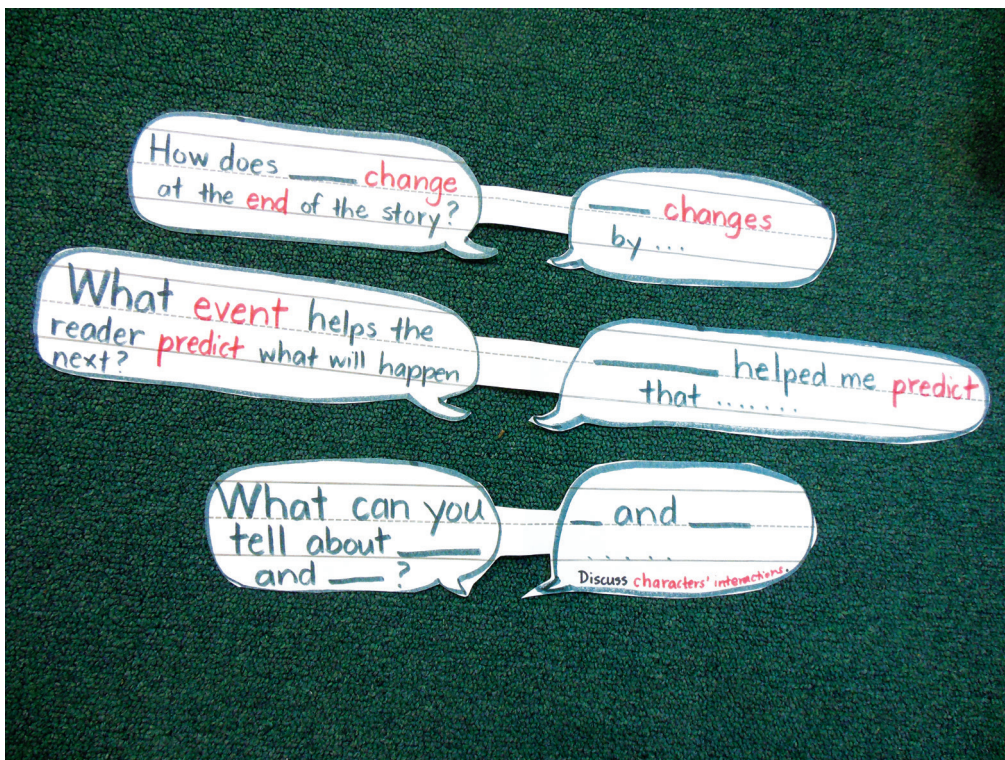
I’d like to
add
something.

Use Conversation Cards to Develop Accountable Talk

Show children how to be an active listener by using conversation cards for accountable (listening and) talk during read aloud. You might include some that are connected with a question on the left and a corresponding answer on the right to help children take turns and differentiate between asking and telling. Use these cards in whole group to teach student expectations. Eventually, you’ll move these cards to the Listening and Speaking station for students to use as they listen and then share questions they have. They can also listen for answers as they work at the Listening and Speaking station together! (There are reproducible conversation cards available on the companion website, resources.corwin.com/simplystations-listening, similar to those shown on the next page.)



These connected conversation cards help students take turns asking questions and thinking about possible answers as they listen to stories.

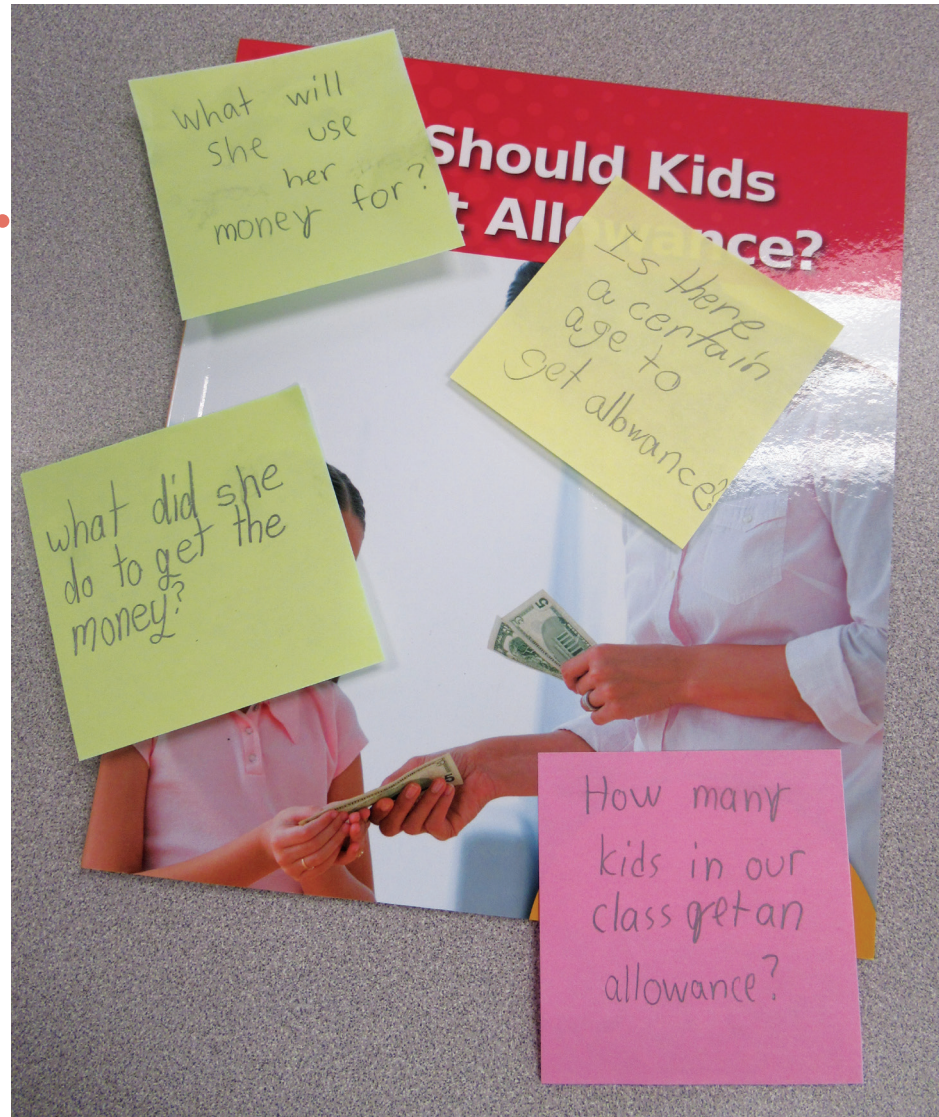


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EL TIP: Use conversation cards both in whole group and at the Listening and Speaking station to provide sentence stems for multilingual students. This will also build academic vocabulary for all learners.

Use Sticky Notes to Keep Track of Questions and Increase Active Listening

During read aloud, model how to jot down questions you have on sticky notes and place them on the page in the text where you had the question. Also show kids how to move the sticky notes to a place where that question is answered. Model how to jot questions on the cover, on pages in the book, and even on the back cover after you've finished reading. These questions may become the impetus for inquiry.

Questions students wrote on different colored sticky notes before (green), during (yellow), and after (pink) reading a text.



On the following pages are two sample lessons for modeling that you can use when teaching children about active listening and asking questions in whole group read aloud. One lesson is for primary grades, and the other is for intermediate learners. Please use these as examples to get you started with strong whole group lessons that will then be transferred to partner practice at the Listening and Speaking station. Use titles that will engage children and help them listen actively as well as prompt them to ask questions. Teach these lessons more than once and watch children become more active listeners and questioners. Substitute different text as you teach the lessons multiple times.

SAMPLE LESSON for MODELING WITH A READ ALOUD BOOK in PRIMARY GRADES

MODEL TEXT: *How to Make Bubbles* by Erika L. Shores (high-interest topic, simple procedural text)

TIMELESS STANDARD: The student will **listen actively** and **ask questions**. (Be sure this reflects your state and grade-level standards; adjust accordingly.)

TEACHER TALK:

- It's very important to listen actively, especially to directions.
- Asking questions helps us pay attention and get information.
- What do you want to know? What questions do you have?

STUDENT TALK: Use the conversation card to demonstrate. A matching printable is available on the companion website, resources.corwin.com/simplystations-listening. Kids will use these in whole group and at the Listening and Speaking station.

- My **question** is _____.

LESSON STEPS:

1. Before reading aloud, review active listening using an anchor chart. Show the front cover and read the title. Model how to ask questions, pointing to a question word chart. Use a sticky note with a large question mark on it to show where you have a question. If you work with students in Grades 1-2, jot down questions using the question word chart as reference.
2. Continue reading the book, pausing at places where you or your students have questions and jotting questions on sticky notes. (e.g., *Why must the water be warm? What is glycerin?*) Use teacher and student talk noted above. You might read part of the book one day and finish it on another. Watch your students to gauge their attention.
3. Read aloud the book again and have students work with you to follow the procedures in the book. Answer their questions if you can, moving the question sticky note to the spot where it is answered. If you don't find the answers, these may become inquiry questions to research. See the *Inquiry and Research Station* book in the Simply Stations series for further ideas.



EL TIP: Use texts that invite students to action, such as procedural texts. Setting a purpose for listening benefits multilingual students and all children, because they have something specific to listen for.

QUICK ASSESS:

Did students listen actively? Which listening behaviors are in place? Which need more time and practice? Did students ask questions? Do they understand the difference between asking and telling?

AUTHOR'S CRAFT CONNECTION:

Use Author's Craft cards to help students think like writers. The goal is for students to understand this well enough that they can do this without teacher assistance at the Listening and Speaking station. After they listen, have them use these to ask each other questions. See matching printables at resources.corwin.com/simplystations-listening.

- Why did the author include a table of contents? A glossary? An index?
- Notice that there's a materials list in photos near the start of the book. Why do you think the author used photos in this book instead of drawings?
- Why did the author write things in order in this book? What words show when or how to do things (e.g., *next*, *slowly*, *gently*)? What would happen if the pages came out and got mixed up?

WRITING CONNECTION:

If you incorporate asking questions into writing procedural text, children may eventually be able to practice writing procedural texts (using questions) as they work at the Writing station. Model, model, model!

Demonstrate how to write procedural text about something your class does on a daily basis (such as walking in the hallway or getting lunch). Create a title for the text that asks a question (*How Do We Walk in the Hallway? How Do We Get Our Lunch?*). Write each step on a separate page, modeling how to ask questions to think about what the reader needs to know next. For example, ask "What do we do after that? Why is it important?" Then mix up the pages and have students put them in order to make a book that tells things in order. Again, model how to ask questions about what you've written ("Is there anything else we should add?"). Eventually, children may write their own procedural texts about things they know how to do.

MOVING THIS LESSON TO PARTNER PRACTICE AT A STATION:

At the Listening and Speaking station, have kids work with a partner to listen to a recorded text. Give them sticky notes with large question

marks on them to place when they have a question. Or, have them write their own questions on these sticky notes before, during, and after reading. Encourage students to talk with their partner about their questions (and find answers if possible). They might also talk about the author's craft of the book they listened to, using Author's Craft cards. Likewise, they might write procedural texts at the Writing station with a title that asks a question. Have them think about questions readers might ask as they write.

SAMPLE LESSON for MODELING WITH A READ ALOUD BOOK in INTERMEDIATE GRADES

MODEL TEXT: *The Little Red Pen* by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel (a complex fiction or nonfiction book that evokes questions)

TIMELESS STANDARD: The student will **listen actively** and **ask questions** to **check understanding** of a speaker or a text. (Be sure this reflects your state and grade-level standards; adjust accordingly.)

TEACHER TALK:

- Listen actively to the speaker and to the text. What will help you do this?
- Asking questions can help you focus on the speaker and/or the text.
- Jotting down my questions helps me pay attention to what I'm reading.

STUDENT TALK: (Use matching printables from resources.corwin.com/simplystations-listening. Kids will use these at the Listening and Speaking station, too.)

- To **listen actively**, I ...
- My **question** is _____?
- I'm not sure about _____. (ask a question here)

LESSON STEPS:

The goal is for students eventually to understand how to listen actively and ask questions well enough that they can continue to do this without assistance at the Listening and Speaking station.



EL TIP: Use books that have illustrations that support the text to increase understanding for students who are learning a new language. Encourage students to ask questions if they don't understand what the text means.

1. Review active listening expectations with your class before reading aloud. Use the anchor chart you created with them. Then have students read the title and look at the front cover and title page. Model how to jot down questions you (or your students) have, one per sticky note, and place these on corresponding parts of the book.
2. Read aloud a few pages at a time, pausing to think aloud about what's happening in the story and articulating questions you have about the action. (For example, *What story is this reminding you of? What words does the author use to help the reader make this connection?*) Use the Teacher Talk and Student Talk ideas above. Also have kids turn and talk with a partner to share questions they have at selected places in the book.
3. As students share their questions, encourage active listening. Help students restate what a friend said or ask questions if they're unsure of what somebody wants to know or to check understanding of the text.
4. Move your sticky notes to places in the book where questions are answered (as you find answers together).
5. At the end of the book, have students tell questions they're asking now and have them explain how asking questions helped them understand the text.

QUICK ASSESS:

Did students listen actively to the book and each other? Which listening behaviors are in place? Which need more time and practice? Did students ask questions to monitor their comprehension and clarify what others said? Did students ask questions that helped them understand the text and each other more deeply?

AUTHOR'S CRAFT CONNECTION:

Use the following to help students think about how the author used questions and other elements to craft the text to interest the reader. Then encourage children to think about doing the same as they write. The goal is for students to do this well enough so they can repeat this same kind of thinking at the Listening and Speaking station after listening to a recorded text. Use Author's Craft cards to guide and support student talk. A printable card for kids to use at the station is available on the companion website, resources.corwin.com/simplystations-listening.

- What got your attention in this book? What helped you to listen actively?
- How did the authors use questions in this book? Why do you think they used a question where they did?

- How is this story like *The Little Red Hen*? When and how did you figure that out?
- Examine the authors' use of color in this book. Why do you think they did this?
- What do you notice about the names of the authors? (*They are actually sisters!*)

WRITING CONNECTION:

If you incorporate asking questions into writing stories and other texts, children may eventually be able to practice doing this as they work at the Writing station.

Model and then have students tell and write stories that include questions to engage the reader. Students might want to experiment with using color or speech bubbles like the authors did in this book.

MOVING THIS LESSON TO PARTNER PRACTICE AT A STATION:

At the Listening and Speaking station, have kids work with a partner using the same conversation cards from the lesson and blank sticky notes to ask questions, but only after they show understanding of how to do this. They may need several models! They should listen to a recorded story and then respond together. They may also incorporate writing questions into the pieces they write at the Writing station.

3. Partner Practice

Once you see that children are able to listen actively and ask questions in whole group, you're ready to move that same work into partner practice at the Listening and Speaking station. At first, learners will be doing the same thing you've modeled during launching lessons. But over time, students should be able to extend this skill as they listen to all kinds of recorded texts. Here are some additional, grade-specific suggestions to help you think about the best things for you to model and for your children to practice at the Listening and Speaking station.

Kindergarten

- Little ones may have trouble focusing and listening actively, especially if they haven't been in formal school settings. Be clear about your expectations and give verbal directions for listening. For example, "*Look at the person speaking (or reading). Listen to what is happening in the story, so you can talk with your friends about it.*" Delay putting them in the Listening and Speaking station until you see that they can focus

attention on listening in whole or small group. You might try using recorded books on YouTube that children may engage with more readily at first at the Listening and Speaking station.

- Five- and six-year-olds are big on telling stories instead of asking questions. In whole or small group, when they tell instead of ask, say, “*You are telling a story now. Try asking a question. My question is ... or What happened ...?*” Teach question words and post a small version of the question word anchor chart at the Listening and Speaking station to remind them to ask questions and not tell stories.
- You might use sticky notes with bold black question marks on them (instead of jotting down actual questions) when modeling asking questions. Have kids use these same prepared sticky notes at the Listening and Speaking station to show where they had questions. Be sure they stop and ask questions of each other. Again, post and remind them to point to question words on a small version of the question words anchor chart.

Grades 1–2

- As stories get longer, you might see children’s active listening falter. Pay attention to your children when reading aloud to them. Be sure they are listening before continuing with a book. If interest wanes, try acting out a part or asking them to chime in on a repeating or predictable part. Remind them of your expectations for active listening and why this is important. As they work at the Listening and Speaking station, tell children to join in on the repeating or predictable parts, too. If you do this, you might teach kids how to listen without headphones. Teach them how to control the volume (of the recording and their voices!). Place a colored sticker on the books with repeating/predictable parts to remind students to join in.
- Six- and seven-year-olds may still confuse asking and telling. Be persistent. Use suggestions from the kindergarten section above.
- Model how to use the connected conversation cards (found on the companion website, resources.corwin.com/simplystations-listening) to encourage partners to ask and answer questions. Begin in whole group during read aloud with turn and talk. Be sure students can use these well before moving the cards into the Listening and Speaking station. Remind them to use the cards before they begin stations. Occasionally, ask children to tell about conversation cards they used here during Reflection Time at the end of stations.
- Having a copy of the question words anchor chart at the Listening and Speaking station may remind children to ask questions. It will also provide a model for how to spell these words when kids are jotting down questions as they listen to recorded books at the Listening and Speaking station.

Grades 3–4

- Students at these grade levels should be improving in active listening, but some may still need reminders of how to listen. It's important for you to only give directions (or say something) one time in whole group. Let students know this is your norm and that you expect them to listen actively. Give one direction and have kids do this task before giving the next direction.
- Use an anchor chart for accountable talk and conversation cards from this book to help students with active listening both in whole group and at the Listening and Speaking station.
- Provide blank sticky notes at the Listening and Speaking station for kids to use as they listen to recorded books or podcasts. Have them jot down questions they have as they listen. Teach them how to share their questions with their partner after listening and how to help find answers to questions, too.
- Continue to model how to listen actively and ask questions in upper grades. You might keep an ongoing list on a bulletin board or display space of open-ended questions your students have generated, especially related to social studies and science during whole group. Invite students to add to this list after asking questions at the Listening and Speaking station, too. Eventually, these may become research topics your students want to investigate.
- Invite older students to create recordings of books that invoke questions for their peers to listen to at the Listening and Speaking station. You might convert this station into a Recording Studio. See page 154 for more information.

4. Reflect With Students

After your students have worked with this timeless standard at the Listening and Speaking station, reflect on what they've done here. Be sure to include a five- to ten-minute Reflection Time after stations where children can tell others what they've learned and done at this station. Section 4 of this book shows samples of forms you can download from the companion website, **resources.corwin.com/simplystations-listening**, to jot down your ideas about the work you and your children did.

Students may use the questions below to talk about the work that they did at the Listening and Speaking station during cleanup time. During Reflection Time, you can ask these questions again to learn more about what students did at this station today. (There are matching printables at **resources.corwin.com/simplystations-listening** that you can place at the Listening and Speaking station for readers to use.)

1. Were you an active listener at the Listening and Speaking station today? What did you do that helped you listen actively?
2. What was a question you asked while listening to a text at the Listening and Speaking station today? Did you find the answer to your question? What was the answer?
3. What did you notice today at the Listening and Speaking station about how authors used questions in their books? How can you try that in your writing?

This anchor chart reminds students of things to say when listening actively and having discussions.

