



Educator Lesson Guide

RANGE	SUBJECTS	DURATION
Upper Elementary/Middle	Language Arts, Visual Arts, Social Studies, Social Emotional Learning	3 Activities Approx. 60-100 minutes each depending on differentiation

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson guide includes activities accompanying Episode 3: Nonverbal Communication, part of the "Communication Nation" series by The Children's Hour Inc.

The episode features interviews with Marci Laurel, a speech-language pathologist at the University of New Mexico's Center for Development and Disability, Brad Klein, a comedian and proud CODA (Child of Deaf Adults), and Tibbany Ho, a speech-language pathologist and Assistive Technology Coordinator at Rio Rancho Public Schools in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. They are interviewed by Katie Stone, the Founder, Executive Director, and Producer of The Children's Hour Inc., and members from the Kids Crew, youth journalists who help produce The Children's Hour as part of a free extracurricular activity in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Educational materials are created by Lorraine Archibald, Licensed Educator and Educational Director for The Children's Hour, and Amber Arnett, Licensed Special Education Educator and Educational Consultant.

The series and accompanying learning materials explore various forms of communication through languages, verbal abilities, media, and community building. They aim to serve as tools for educators and families to support the development of critical thinking skills, build social-emotional skills, celebrate diverse identities, and promote tolerance and empathy.

The learning materials align mostly to a 5th-grade level, but with differentiation, can be appropriate for grades 3-8 or beyond. Each activity can be completed approximately within a 60-90 minute lesson, not including extension options. The activities can be taught together or separately. Additional materials in the lesson guide include Episode Vocabulary, Standards, and Teaching Tips, including universal supports and targeted, intensive intervention ideas. The learning materials support lesson design and allow for flexible alignment to assessments based on grade level, site, and local needs. To maintain inclusivity and universality, the materials do not provide a specific assessment component.

This series and its materials were made possible with support from the New Mexico Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.





Part 1 Activity: Emotion Charades: Nonverbal Game

OBJECTIVES

- Learners will identify and interpret different types of nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, body language, gestures, and eye contact.
- Learners will increase awareness of their own nonverbal signals and how they may be perceived by others.

MATERIALS

- Audio of Part 1 "Nonverbal Communication"
- Student Activity Page
- Index cards
- Paper and Timer

STANDARDS

National Health Education Standards

- Standard 4: Use interpersonal communication skills to support the health and well-being of self and others. 4.5.1 Use effective communication skills to express thoughts, feelings, wants, and needs to support the health and well-being of self and others.

Common Core

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), five core competencies in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

- Self-Awareness: The ability to recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.
- Social Awareness: The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others.

KEY VOCABULARY

Nonverbal Communication (Non-ver-bal Com-mun-i-ca-tion): Sending and receiving messages without using words or spoken language.

Nonverbal Cue (Non-ver-bal Cue): Ways that people express themselves without using words. These cues include gestures, facial expressions, and body movements. They help us understand what someone is feeling or thinking.

Neurodivergence (Neu-ro-di-ver-gent): When a person's brain works differently than what is considered typical. A person with neurodivergence might live with autism, ADHD, a learning disability, or more.

Emotion (E-mo-tion): A strong feeling or mental reaction caused by a person's circumstances, environment, or mood. Emotions can also cause physical reactions.

Exaggerate (Ex-ag-ger-ate): To make something sound more extreme or dramatic than it really is.

Facial Expression (Fa-cial Ex-pres-sion): How a person uses their face to show their feelings.

Gesture (Ges-ture): A movement of the body or limbs that expresses or emphasizes an idea or feeling.



Part 1 Activity: Emotion Charades: Nonverbal Game

LESSON PROGRESSION

Introduction (5 minutes): Begin by discussing the importance of emotions and nonverbal communication. Explain that while many people learn nonverbal communication by observing others, some have to practice recognizing emotions more than others.

Contextualize (15-25 minutes): 1. Explicitly teach key vocabulary by helping students decode words and their meanings. 2. Play the audio clip "Part 1: Nonverbal Communication".

Discussion Questions (may be asked before/during/after listening):

1. Can you give examples of how people communicate without using words?
2. How does nonverbal communication help us understand how someone is feeling?
3. Have you ever experienced a situation where you misunderstood someone's nonverbal communication? What happened?
4. Why is it important to be aware of nonverbal communication differences across cultures?
5. What steps can you take to better understand and respect others' nonverbal communication?

Activity (40-60 minutes):

1. Hand out the worksheet "Emotion Charades: Nonverbal Game Word Bank." Read the instructions out loud and check for understanding. Help learners research meanings. You may want to prepare a list of emotions appropriate for your learners' age and ability levels.
2. Read the "Emotion Charades: Nonverbal Game Rules" aloud. Check for understanding. Learners will use their Word Bank chart to create the cards for the game. Encourage color, design, and images or symbols.
3. Once the cards are ready, combine and shuffle them and put students into groups of 6-10 (you can also modify for a smaller group). Model by acting out the emotion "surprised." Any player may guess the word being acted. The person who guesses correctly first wins the round. For them to earn a point, ask the person who guessed it to provide the nonverbal evidence they used to determine the emotion. Have them use the sentence stem: "I know you were acting out [emotion] because of the way you _____."
4. Have players from each group take turns acting out emotions. Circulate among the groups to observe and provide feedback as needed. Encourage learners to use exaggerated expressions and to imagine relevant scenarios creatively.
5. When you're ready to end the game, instruct students to finish their final round, and prepare for the transition back to their seats to wrap up the activity with reflection.

For a more competitive version, have sets of teams guess and earn points separately, and offer the chance to "steal" if the emotion isn't guessed within an allotted time of 30-60 secs. In this case, they each have their own separate stack of cards.

Closing (5-10 Minutes)

Have learners complete the reflection questions, quietly and independently for 3 minutes, then allow them to pair, share, and/or discuss with their team. End by emphasizing the importance of nonverbal communication and how understanding emotions can help us communicate better.

DIFFERENTIATION

Provide visual cues (such as posters or pictures) of emotions for learners needing extra support.

Pair learners with stronger verbal skills with those who may struggle with expression to encourage collaboration and support.

Challenge learners to use an online thesaurus to find more nuanced emotions (reluctance, amusement, etc).

Challenge learners to explore differences in nonverbal communication between cultures.



Part 2 Activity: Nonverbal Communication

OBJECTIVES

- Learners will observe and identify nonverbal communication cues in a public setting.
- Learners will analyze the meaning and context of observed nonverbal interactions.
- Learners will reflect on the importance of nonverbal communication in everyday life.

Investigation

MATERIALS:

- Audio of Part 2 "Sign Language"
- Student Activity Page
- Pencil
- Access to a public space (such as a park, mall, playground)

STANDARDS

Next Generation Science Standards: Science and Engineering Practices

- Planning and Carrying Out Investigations
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data

Common Core

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- RI.5.1:CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7: Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or solve a problem efficiently.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), five core competencies in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

- Social Awareness: The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.

KEY VOCABULARY

Nonverbal Communication (Non-ver-bal Com-mun-i-ca-tion): Sending and receiving messages without using words or spoken language.

Nonverbal Cue (Non-ver-bal Cue): Ways that people express themselves without using words. These cues include gestures, facial expressions, and body movements. They help us understand what someone is feeling or thinking.

Emotion (E-mo-tion): A strong feeling or mental reaction caused by a person's circumstances, environment, or mood. Emotions can also cause physical reactions.

Exaggerate (Ex-ag-ger-ate): To make something sound more extreme or dramatic than it really is.

Facial Expression (Fa-cial Ex-pres-sion): How a person uses their face to show their feelings.

Gesture (Ges-ture): A movement of the body or limbs that expresses or emphasizes an idea or a feeling.

Body Language (Bo-dy Lan-guage): The gestures, movements, and mannerisms a person uses to communicate with others.

Eye Contact (Eye Con-tact): The act of looking another person straight in the eye.



Part 2 Activity: Nonverbal Communication Investigation

LESSON PROGRESSION

Introduction (5 minutes): Begin by discussing the concept of communication and how messages are both sent and received to prevent miscommunication. Explain that communication involves words and nonverbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language. Some people, such as Deaf individuals, rely heavily on using their bodies to communicate.

Contextualize (15 minutes): Explicitly teach key vocabulary by helping students decode words and their meanings. Play the audio clip "Part 2: Sign Language".

Discussion Questions (may be asked before/during/after listening):

1. What are some ways people communicate without using words? Can you think of any other forms besides sign language?
2. What are some challenges Deaf people face when communicating with hearing people?
3. What is the ADA, and why is it important for Deaf people?
4. How do Deaf people ensure they have clear communication in important situations?
5. How can hearing people show respect and inclusivity when communicating with Deaf individuals? What actions can they take to communicate more smoothly?

Activity (35 minutes):

Prepare for Observation:

- Hand out the "Nonverbal Communication Investigation" worksheet. Read instructions out loud and check for understanding. Discuss the importance of being observant and why a person with a hearing impairment may need to be more observant than one without. Explain that learners will go to a public area to observe nonverbal interactions between people. Remind learners of any safety concerns, to respect others' privacy, and not to interfere with the interactions they are observing.

Observation:

- Learners will find a spot where they can quietly observe people interacting and complete the "Nonverbal Communication Investigation" worksheet. Encourage them to focus on nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, body language, gestures, and eye contact. Allow them 15-20 minutes to observe and take notes.
- Have a brief discussion about what they observed. Ask questions such as, "What kind of nonverbal cues did you notice?" and "Did you notice any patterns or similarities in the nonverbal behaviors of different people?"

Closing (5 Minutes)

Have learners reflect on why nonverbal communication is important.

DIFFERENTIATION

If learners struggle with language, offer scaffolding with sentence starters and guided support during observation and note-taking.

Pair learners and assign roles (observer, note-taker) to encourage collaborative learning and shared responsibility.

If students cannot observe within the community, utilize online resources for virtual observations or simulations of nonverbal communication scenarios with audio muted.

Encourage advanced learners to explore cultural differences in nonverbal communication through research or extended readings.



Part 3 Activity: Communication Board

OBJECTIVES

- Learners will understand the purpose and function of Assistive Augmentative Communication systems.
- Learners will create a personalized AAC communication board using a provided template.
- Learners will demonstrate an understanding of using the board effectively.

MATERIALS

- Audio of Part 3: Assistive Augmentative Communication
- Student Activity Page
- Pencil, colored pencils, or crayons
- Pictures/icons for communication symbols (can be printed or drawn)
- Glue stick and scissors if needed

STANDARDS

Common Core

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SE.5.4: Demonstrate understanding of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems and their use in facilitating effective communication for individuals with disabilities.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), five core competencies in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

- **Self-Awareness:** The ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
- **Self-Management:** The ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.
- **Responsible Decision-Making:** The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Students:

- **Creative Communicator:** Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats, and digital media appropriate to their goals.

KEY VOCABULARY

Assistive Technology (As-sis-tive Tech-no-lo-gy): Any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the daily life of somebody with a disability.

Alternative Assistive Communication (AAC) (Al-ter-na-tive A-sis-tive Com-mun-i-ca-tion): Different tools and methods people use to help them communicate.

Augmentative (Aug-men-ta-tive): To add to, expand, or make greater, often to make something more usable or helpful. Augmentative communication gives a person access to more speech.

Alternative (Al-ter-na-tive): A different option, choice, or possibility.

Low-Tech (Low-tech): A way to describe a tool that is simple and easy to use. Low-tech tools are often easy to access.

High-Tech (High-Tech): Advanced technology such as electronic devices, including computers, tablets, and more.



Part 3 Activity: Communication Board

LESSON PROGRESSION

Introduction (5 minutes): Ask learners to think about different ways people communicate (speaking, writing, gestures, sign language). Explain that some people use tools to help them speak. Brainstorm both low-tech tools (paper, whiteboard, writing, pointing) and high-tech tools (Siri/Alexa, speech-to-text, emojis).

Contextualize (10 minutes): Explicitly teach key vocabulary by helping students decode words and their meanings. Play the audio clip "Part 3: Assistive Augmentative Communication."

Discussion Questions (may be asked before/during/after listening):

1. Have you ever had to find a different way to communicate with someone who speaks a different language or has difficulty speaking? What did you do?
2. Have you ever used technology to help you communicate or understand something better? Can you give an example?
3. How can we make our communities more inclusive for people who use AAC or other assistive technologies for communication?
4. What are some of the benefits of having detailed communication boards in places like classrooms and playgrounds?

Activity (30 minutes, may take longer based on individual effort and whether they choose to draw or gather other materials to make board):

1. Show examples of AAC devices or boards. Discuss their purpose and how they help people communicate. Point out variations and explain that there is no right or wrong way to create one.
2. Hand out the "Personalized Communication Board" worksheet. Carefully read the instructions and explain the purpose. Brainstorm and plan what symbols or pictures they will include on their communication board. They should consider adding common words and phrases and topics relevant to their daily communication.
3. Guide learners as they assemble their boards. They can write, draw, and cut/paste images found online, in magazines, etc.).
4. Once completed, allow them to share their board with a partner or small group. Encourage them to explain the symbols and how they are organized.

Closing (5 Minutes)

Have learners reflect on the process of creating their communication board. Ask questions such as: What was difficult about selecting symbols? How would your board help someone communicate? Instruct learners to clean up their materials and return them as needed.

DIFFERENTIATION

Circulate among students to provide individual support.

Offer guidance on color coding, arrangement, or symbol choice based on learners' needs and abilities.

Support learners who need assistance in choosing appropriate symbols or organizing their board.

Encourage them to draw their own images or simplify the template by removing column(s)

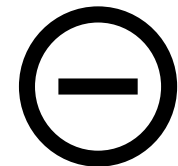
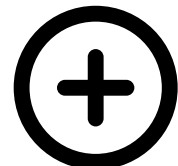
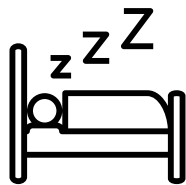
Challenge advanced learners to create more complex communication boards with a wider range of categories. They can also write a short explanation or instruction manual on how to use their communication board effectively

Part 3 Activity: Communication Board

Appendix

Provided is an example of categories and a small bank of symbols. The learners' boards will have visuals in their boxes.

Pronouns	Decisions	Verbs	Emotions	5 Ws
I	yes	want	happy	who
you	no	like	sad	what
me	maybe	drink	mad	when
we	more	eat	tired	where
he	again	go	hurt	why
she	all done	stop	scared	how
they	not	play	surprise	''





Vocabulary

Nonverbal Communication (Non-ver-bal Com-mu-ni-ca-tion): Sending and receiving messages without using words or spoken language.

Nonverbal Cue (Non-ver-bal Cue): Ways that people express themselves without using words. These cues include gestures, facial expressions, and body movements. They help us understand what someone is feeling or thinking.

Emotion (E-mo-tion): A strong feeling or mental reaction caused by a person's circumstances, environment, or mood. Emotions can also cause physical reactions.

Exaggerate (Ex-ag-ger-ate): To make something sound more extreme or dramatic than it really is.

Facial Expression (Fa-cial Ex-pres-sion): How a person uses their face to show their feelings.

Body Language (Bo-dy Lan-guage): The gestures, movements, and mannerisms a person uses to communicate with others.

Neurodivergence (Neu-ro-di-ver-gent): When a person's brain works differently than what is considered typical. A person with neurodivergence might live with autism, ADHD, a learning disability, or more.

Gesture (Ges-ture): A movement of the body or limbs that expresses or emphasizes an idea or feeling.

Eye Contact (Eye Con-tact): The act of looking another person straight in the eye.

Assistive Technology (As-sts-tive Tech-no-lo-gy): Any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the daily life of somebody with a disability.

Alternative Assistive Communication (AAC) (Al-ter-na-tive As-sis-tive Com-mun-i-ca-tion): Different tools and methods people use to help them communicate.

Augmentative (Aug-men-ta-tive): To add to, expand, or make greater, often to make something more usable or helpful. Augmentative communication gives a person access to more speech.

Alternative (Al-ter-na-tive): A different option, choice, or possibility.

Low-Tech (Low-tech): A way to describe a tool that is simple and easy to use. Low-tech tools are often easy to access.

High-Tech (High-Tech): Advanced technology such as electronic devices, including computers, tablets, and more.



Teacher Tips

Lessons may need to be adapted based on learner needs. Ideas for universal supports and differentiation accompany each activity, use the chart below to help you plan out leveled systems of learner support.

Supports	Planning
<p>Universal Supports Classroom community building, safe environment, routines, audio and visual supports, structured brain breaks, objectives posted, modeling, decoding words, concise accessible instructions, collaboration and peer support, materials are culturally relevant and responsive</p>	<p>Throughout the lesson, all learners will benefit from:</p>
<p>Targeted Intervention Formatively assess to get data, provide prompt feedback, scaffold the lesson with more context and break into steps, shelter instruction with explicit comprehension support for vocabulary and concepts. Contextualize unfamiliar concepts or words.</p>	<p>I anticipate some learners may struggle with:</p> <p>I can prevent this, or support them by:</p>
<p>Intensive Intervention Identify when a student is struggling, consider an intervention that accounts for social emotional or basic needs, determine their preferred learning style, provide one on one support, long-term planning and data tracking.</p>	<p>A few learners may need:</p> <p>Who can support me with this?</p>



Standards

Common Core

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- RI.5.1:CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7: Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SE.5.4: Demonstrate understanding of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems and their use in facilitating effective communication for individuals with disabilities.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), five core competencies in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

- Self-Awareness: The ability to recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.
- Social Awareness: The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others.
- Responsible Decision-Making: The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

National Core Arts Standards:

- Performing/Presenting/Producing: Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Connecting: Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 4: Use interpersonal communication skills to support the health and well-being of self and others. 4.5.1 Use effective communication skills to express thoughts, feelings, wants, and needs to support the health and well-being of self and others.

Next Generation Science Standards: Science and Engineering Practices:

- Planning and Carrying Out Investigations
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data