TITLE: Communications Basics, Nonverbal
RELEVANT H.S. SUBJECT AREAS: Advisory, Life Skills, Language Arts
GRADE LEVELS: 7-12
SP TAB/CONTENT AREA: Personal/Building a Safe, Healthy Self

GOALS:
• Students will consider and discuss what it means to be an effective communicator, including speaking, listening, and nonverbal interaction.
• Students will demonstrate understanding of concept of nonverbal communication by giving short theater performances in small groups to full class.
• Students will understand principles of nonverbal communication better through evaluation of nonverbal performances.

OBJECTIVES:
• Students write a quick journal entry to give personal definitions of effective communication.
• Students participate in large-group discussion points of view from peers.
• Students will demonstrate understanding of nonverbal communication concepts by creating pantomimes for class depicting a range of assigned situations/emotions.
• Students will demonstrate understanding of nonverbal communication concepts by observing classmates’ pantomimes and recording perceptions/interpretations.
• Students will complete short post-activity question set to reinforce key concepts and capture reactions.

ASCA STANDARDS ADDRESSED:
• PS:A2.6 Use effective communication skills
• PS:A2.7 Know that communication involves speaking, listening, and nonverbal behavior

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED:
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:
No specialized prior knowledge is necessary to complete this lesson.

MATERIALS:
• Student Paths article “The Loudest Voice of All – Nonverbal Communication”
• Class set of printed materials (REPRODUCIBLES A and B)
• Teacher’s printed materials—12 situations/emotions for pantomimes. (REPRODUCIBLE C. Cut paper to distribute to groups during class)

LESSON OVERVIEW:
The lesson comprises multiple stages to be distributed a one-hour period or two 30-minute class periods.
DAY ONE:
• Introductory journaling and large-group discussion
• Instruction to define vital terminology and concepts of communication
• Students work in groups to create pantomimes
DAY TWO:
- Students perform pantomime and take notes on the activity
- Students complete activity wrap to focus attention on effective nonverbal communication

**ASSESSMENT:**
Use informal assessment of pantomimes and developing ability to express emotions. Instructor may require students to turn in REPRODUCIBLES A and B to demonstrate participation in the activity.

**LESSON PROCEDURE DAY ONE**

**Introduction—Journal and Discuss to Define Communication (10 minutes)**
Write the following two phrases on the board:
“Good communication is …” and “A good communicator …”

Instruct students to use notebook paper and respond in full to the two phrases on the board.
“Brainstorm every thought you have to define effective communication and communicators. This list will focus our attention on how we learn the skills of communication.”

**INDEPENDENT:** Allow students to write for five minutes, and circle the room to encourage students to continue to brainstorm.

**SHARE:** Ask for two volunteers to write a class list on the board or projector. Facilitate the discussion to create lists for the two definitions: an act of good communication, and a person with skills for quality communication. Work to capture skills, examples, and other student responses that define the full spectrum of effective communication, including speaking, listening, and the nonverbal cues people use to convey messages.

**ANALYZE:** Spend a minute making notes on the board to find a few themes or ways to organize the ideas in the brainstorm. Ask students which ideas would count as examples of nonverbal communication.

Use the analysis to focus on nonverbal and segue into the next instructional section of activity.

**Defining Nonverbal Communication (5 minutes)**
Read aloud the following questions and information for students:
Think about a recent conversation you had with someone that was very important or emotional. How could you tell how the person was feeling?
Recall a time when you watched someone having an argument or expressing anger: How did you know they were upset?

We’re able to understand such messages because we’re effective readers and users of nonverbal communication. Human communications are generally divided into three parts: speaking, listening, and nonverbal. A study at UCLA of human interpersonal communication once offered that the nonverbal parts of our communication make up 93% of our overall effectiveness as communicators. Broken down further, the study suggests that, for effective communicative performance:

- 7% of the impact came from the words used
- 38% from the voice quality
- 55% from other nonverbal cues

Nonverbal cues are facial expressions, eye contact, posture, hand movements

Take a look at our list on the board. Did we include words used, voice quality, and nonverbal cues? Now it is time to practice performing these nonverbal cues for specific situations.

**Group Activity: Student Prepare Pantomimes (15 minutes)**
Explain to students that we will work in groups to better understand the power of nonverbal communication. Ask:
Does anyone know what a “pantomime” or more commonly “mime” is?

Take 2 minutes to discuss the term, so that all students understand:
A pantomime is a theatrical performance with no words or sound; the actors use only gestures and facial expressions.
Instruct students to form groups of 2-4 people to create a pantomime. Once groups are formed, distribute the situations (cut from REPRODUCIBLE C).

Give students the instructions for group work. Take 10 minutes with your group to plan your pantomime at this time. Remember, you may use no sound or words in this performance. Everything must be communicated nonverbally. Here is the list of situations (cut from REPRODUCIBLE C):

1. Subject choking in restaurant, needing help; others’ reactions
2. Subject coming home late, parents waiting up angry
3. Subjects walking down scary street late at night
4. Subjects playing a practical joke on someone
5. Subjects finding out their favorite celebrity is coming to town
6. Subjects receiving a bad grade on a test they thought they’d done well on
7. Subjects arguing about a sporting event
8. Subject learning his/her pet has died; others’ reactions
9. Subject opening a gift, surprised at contents; others’ reactions
10. Subjects encountering students from rival school at the mall
11. Subject begging parents for car, parents resisting
12. Subject can’t find ride home from school, when younger siblings need childcare; others’ reactions

LESSON PROCEDURE DAY TWO

Introduction with Final Group Preparation (5 minutes)
Begin class session by refreshing students’ memories of the previous task. Ask: What is a pantomime? Explain the pantomimes are a way to exaggerate gestures and display of emotions to effectively convey a message of importance. Re-form into groups for final preparations before delivering their pantomimes for the class.

Deliver Pantomimes, Student Observation (20 minutes)
Distribute the Observation Notes on REPRODUCIBLE A to all students and direct students to make notes in space indicated as each is performed.

Each student group will perform a 1-minute pantomime in front of the class. Organize it so that all groups are able to perform within the class period.

Student Directions
As you observe the people giving pantomimes, make notes about emotions and events in the situation. The column on the right is to collect brief notes that describe the emotions and situation. In the middle column, record a few notes about why what you see makes you believe what is happening in the situation/emotion. At the end of each pantomime, the actors will tell you what they were acting out and you can complete the third column. Can you guess what is happening in each situation correctly?

REPRODUCIBLE A has 3 columns for students to complete
This is about … Why I think so Actual Situation

1.
2. through 12
After each pantomime, allow performing group of students to share their topic with the rest of the class, and allow them a short period of discussion with the audience.

**Individual Reflective Questions (5 minutes)**
After all pantomimes are performed, distribute the Activity Wrap Questions on REPRODUCIBLE B to students and instruct them to complete it.

**Questions on Handout B**
1. What are 3 components of how humans communicate with one another?
2. List 5 types of nonverbal cues in communication.
3. Draw 3 sketches of nonverbal cues that you send to other people with your body and face.

**Conclusion**
Instructor may identify a question from the previous discussion to ask the class and spark further reflection after class about using effective communication skills.
Pantomime Notes, Reflection Questions

Observation Notes
As you observe the pantomimes, make notes about what you believe is going on. In the middle column, record a few notes about why what you’re seeing makes you predict the situation/emotion being portrayed. At the end of each presentation, the actors will tell you the situation and you can complete the third column.

This pantomime is about … Why I think so Actual pantomime

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.
Activity Wrap Questions

What are 3 components of how humans communicate with one another?

1. 
2. 
3. 

List 5 types of nonverbal cues in communication.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Draw 3 sketches of nonverbal cues that you send to other people with your body and face.

1. 
2. 
3. 
Situations/Emotions for group (cut and distribute)

1. Subject choking in restaurant, needing help; others’ reactions
2. Subject coming home late, parents waiting up angry
3. Subjects walking down scary street late at night
4. Subjects playing a practical joke on someone
5. Subjects finding out their favorite celebrity is coming to town
6. Subjects receiving a bad grade on a test they thought they’d done well on
7. Subjects arguing about a sporting event
8. Subject learning his/her pet has died; others’ reactions
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(If more than 12 are required, students or teacher may invent own situations/emotions.)
The loudest voice of all — nonverbal communication

— by Flora Richards-Gustafson

You use nonverbal communication every day, whether you mean to or not. While verbal communication involves spoken messages, nonverbal communication is body language and wordless cues, such as smiling. To master the art of communication, you have to be aware of what your actions say.

**Posture:** It communicates your interest, feelings, degree of attention and how much you like or respect someone. More than just slouching or standing up straight, posture includes the placement of arms and legs, and the position of shoulders and jaw. Often people show interest in a person or conversation by copying the posture of the person, or leaning forward and leaving arms uncrossed. And if a friend says nothing’s wrong, but she has crossed arms and slumping shoulders, it would be hard to believe her because her body says otherwise.

**Gestures:** You can make gestures with your hands, arms, body, head, face and eyes. Many gestures are culture-specific. For example, the shape that you make with your hand to say “I got your nose” is considered rude in some parts of the world, while it’s a symbol of good luck in others. On the other hand, gestures like shoulder shrugging and smiling have the same meaning all around the world.

**Eye contact:** Eye contact is the main way you communicate your interest, involvement and attention in another person (not necessarily romantic) or information you receive.

Your face and eyes are a big giveaway when it comes to telling the truth. With the ability to make over 10,000 expressions, your face usually shows emotions and communicates your honesty. Notice how many people can’t keep a straight face or look you in the eyes when they lie?

**Touch:** It is the first sense you develop in the womb. Even when people can’t hear or see, they can still use touch to communicate. Types of touch used to communicate in the U.S. include hugging, handshakes, high-fives, kisses, hand-holding or pats on the back.

Communication is the gateway to understanding, and nonverbal communication is one of the most important skills you can have. ☝️