

Activity 2: The Eyes Have It

Set the Stage

When you stand in front of an audience, you often have a point to make. But first there's something else you must make—a friend of your audience. Looking for friendly faces and locking eyes with their owners will put you at ease and engage the audience members. As simple as it sounds, it isn't always easy to do.

Speak Out

Give a short, unrehearsed speech in front of an audience. Make eye contact with listeners. Ask each person to raise his or her hand as you look at that person. See how many hands are up at the end of the presentation.

Stretch the Message

Pair up with different people and have a staring contest. Who can maintain eye contact the longest? Is this a technique you would want to use while addressing an audience?



Open Mike

Share: How many people's hands were up at the end of your speech? How did you feel looking at your audience? How did you know when to look from one person to another? What did you learn about audience feedback from this activity?

Process: What meaning might you convey when you speak to someone without looking at them? How are credibility and eye contact related? What do you think this expression means: "the eyes are the window to the soul"?

Generalize: What examples can you give of eye contact and its benefit in your everyday activities? How is other nonverbal communication important to your everyday life?

Apply: How could you use what you learned in another type of communication? In other parts of your life?

Age Level

5-19

Life Skill

Communication

Project Skill

Making eye contact

Objective

Give a short, impromptu speech with emphasis on eye contact.

Success Indicator

Participant makes eye contact with at least five audience members (5-or 6-year-olds may want to begin with one or two).

Message Makers

None

Wise Words

Experts say the audience is your mirror. What you project, it will return. Look at your audience members, and they will look at you. Smile at your audience and see what is reflected.