

# Communication in the Classroom

## A Guide to Teaching Students Assertiveness Skills

Learning to be assertive helps everyone to communicate well! For students who are learning how to set boundaries, stand up for themselves and learn how to get their needs met in a respectful manner, learning how to be assertive is an important life skill.



Teaching assertiveness to students can help them:

- Work through conflicts calmly with classmates
- Respectfully ask for help or ask clarifying questions
- Grow their confidence

### What does it mean to be assertive?

When students know how to communicate clearly and set boundaries, they're better equipped to handle conflicts and stress.

This may look like being able to:

- Clearly express your wants and beliefs in a respectful way.
- Be honest about how you feel.
- Share your opinion without feeling the need to convince the other person.
- Respect others' beliefs while still sharing your own.
- Set clear boundaries with others.
- Politely let someone know when you don't like how they're treating you.

# Start the Conversation About Assertiveness in Your Classroom

If you're ready to share this social-emotional topic with your students, here's a script with interactive scenarios to help your students learn about assertiveness and how to use it in their daily lives.



**start here:** "Being **assertive** means expressing your thoughts, wants, and needs in a direct yet respectfully way. Being able to **assert** your thoughts can allow you to be honest with others without hurting someone's feelings. This can be tricky at times, but thinking through scenarios ahead of time can help you to feel more confident.

When we are assertive, we must be mindful of how we deliver our message! Here is how we can do that:



**Watch your tone:** Using a calm voice instead of raising our voice or shouting can help us to have kind communication.



**Be mindful of body language:** Crossing our arms or rolling our eyes can send a negative message. Show you care with a smile or listening face instead.



**Start with "I":** We should focus on our own thoughts and feelings by starting our sentence with "I think" or "I feel" instead of bringing up the other person's thoughts!

## Let's Practice Scenarios

Let's discuss some ways that you can **express an opinion** that is different from your friends without hurting their feelings. How would you handle the following scenarios?

**1** Your friend gets a new dog and keeps talking about how it's the best type of dog. You like dogs but not the type that your friend has. Your friend asks you "Don't you think this type of dog is the best?!" How can you answer?

**2** You really like presidential candidate "A" but your friend likes presidential candidate "B." Your friend says whoever votes for candidate "A" is not a nice person. What can you say?



Now let's talk about how we can use our assertiveness skills to respectfully ask someone **to stop doing something we don't like!**

**1** You are trying to do your work quietly and the person behind you keeps tapping their pencil on their desk.

**2** The person behind you in class keeps kicking your seat.



3

You are taking a test and the person next to you keeps trying to look at your paper.

4

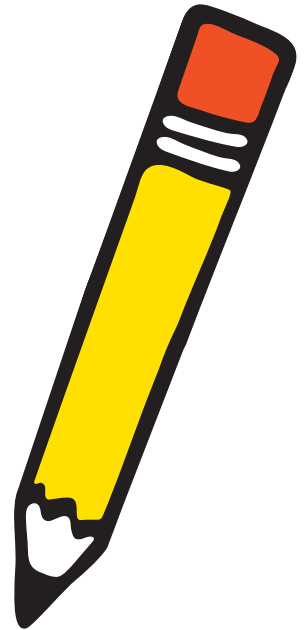
Your friend keeps eating your chips at lunch.

5

Your neighborhood friend always wants to ride bikes but you want to swing on the swings.

6

Your mom thinks that pasta with sauce is your favorite dinner but you don't really like sauce anymore.



Learning assertiveness can take time and lots of practice! If you have more questions, or an issue comes up that you cannot solve on your own, you can always come up to me!



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