



LISTENING SKILLS WORKSHOP: STARTER PROMPTS AND SAMPLE TOPICS

To help practice paraphrasing, clarifying questions, and nonverbal attentiveness, begin with topics that feel light and low-stakes. This keeps the focus on how we listen rather than what we talk about.

Prompts to Begin the Conversation

- Describe something you love doing and why.
- Share a moment from this week that felt memorable in a good way.
- Tell me about something you want to learn or try this year.
- What is something in your daily life that brings you joy or calm?

Starter Phrases and Questions for Learners

To help guide conversations, offer simple sentence stems:

Paraphrasing Starters

- “So what I hear you saying is...”
- “It sounds like...”
- “If I’m understanding correctly...”
- “What I’m taking away from that is...”

Clarifying Questions

- “Can you tell me more about that?”
- “What made that experience meaningful for you?”
- “What do you enjoy most about it?”
- “How did you get interested in that?”
- “What happened next?”

Examples of Easy, Low-Stakes Topics

These topics are light enough to keep the activity safe, but open enough to allow genuine conversation.

- A favorite childhood game or activity
- A hobby or skill they enjoy learning
- A place they like to visit in their community
- A meme, song, show, or trend they find interesting
- A food they love (or dislike) and why
- A goal they are working toward this year
- A recent moment that made them laugh
- Something they wish more people knew about them
- A favorite class, teacher, or school experience
- A tradition or routine they enjoy

Debrief Suggestions

After listening activities, spark discussion using prompts such as:

- What behaviors or phrases helped you feel heard?
- What made listening difficult?
- What nonverbal cues helped build trust?
- What cues created possible distance or disconnection?
- How might these skills support conversations about difficult topics in the future?