



Grade 7 • Ages 12-14

# Communicating Effectively

Expressing personal needs in effective ways, showing empathy, and being able to negotiate and compromise are important communication skills for building positive, healthy relationships.

## Unit Objective

Students will demonstrate how using “I” messages and other effective communication skills can help them stand up for themselves and promote a culture of kindness; demonstrate negotiation skills to support the healthy expression of personal needs; demonstrate the ability to state personal needs and articulate limits; and, identify that being grateful is a kind way to communicate.

## Introducing This Unit To Your Students

*For the next few lessons, we are going to talk about ways to communicate effectively. With a partner discuss some positive or healthy ways to talk that make it easier to interact and get along.*

Allow time for students to respond and discuss, either as a class or in small groups. You can also use this time to introduce the key Kindness Concepts (assertiveness, gratitude, respect, self-discipline) and create community definitions for these concepts or share the definitions listed below. Consider using the [Kindness Concept Posters](#) for assertiveness, gratitude, respect and self-discipline as a way to reinforce learning.

Kindness is an intrinsic quality of the heart expressed through an act of benevolence reflecting care and good will for self and others.



These lesson plans were created by The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation. For more information, please visit [randomactsofkindness.org](http://randomactsofkindness.org)

If you have questions or comments, please email us at [teacherhelp@randomactsofkindness.org](mailto:teacherhelp@randomactsofkindness.org)

# Kindness Concepts

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding.

**ASSERTIVENESS** Standing up for yourself and what you believe in while being respectful of the rights and beliefs of others.

**GRATITUDE** Being thankful for and appreciating what you have and those around you.

**RESPECT** Treating people, places, and things with kindness.

**SELF-DISCIPLINE** Controlling one's actions and words for the benefit of self and others.

## Unit Lessons

There are four lessons in this unit plus an optional lesson if you have time.

LESSON TITLE	LESSON GOALS	LESSON MATERIALS
Lesson 1: Speaking Skills	Students will learn effective communication skills and practice in pairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speaking Observation Sheet (p. 4), one for each pair of students</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Assertiveness, Respect, Self-Discipline</li></ul>
Lesson 2: Negotiation Skills	Students will learn appropriate ways of negotiating something they need using effective communication skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Negotiating Skits, teacher copy</li><li>• Negotiating Skits, student copy, 5 copies cut apart before class</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Assertiveness, Respect, Self-Discipline</li></ul>
Lesson 3: "I" Messages	Students will learn to use "I" messages when communicating with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chart paper with "I" Messages written at the top</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Assertiveness, Respect, Self-Discipline</li></ul>
Lesson 4: Showing Gratitude	Students will explore the benefits of showing gratitude and write a letter to someone they feel connected with to show their gratitude.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RAK Journals</li><li>• Paper to write letter</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Gratitude, Respect</li></ul>
Optional Lesson: Government Conflicts & Collaboration Research Project	Students will explore various current events and organizations and examine how they can communicate more effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research materials or access to the Internet</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Assertiveness, Respect, Self-Discipline</li></ul>

## Unit Notes

The lessons in this unit focus on a central theme and connect to different academic curriculum areas.

The lessons are intended to be easy to teach and fun to use while helping to develop social and emotional skills.

Lesson activities use a variety of modalities to address different learning styles and build on each other.

Each lesson includes choice of evaluation or reflection questions, which can be written, discussed or used as journal entries. Consider writing these on the board before the lesson begins.

The activities also incorporate key Kindness Concepts, which can be introduced before teaching the lesson or as the concepts are discussed in the lesson. Consider displaying the [Kindness Concept Posters](#) during the unit. See the [RAK Educator Guide](#) and [Building Trust in the Classroom](#) for information about using Kindness Concepts to create a healthy classroom environment and help students develop pro-social behaviors.

Each activity includes tips for how to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners.

[The Kindness Tool Kit](#) is another way to meet the needs of diverse learners. See the [RAK Educator Guide](#) for how to create and use this tool kit.

RAK also has developed [Focusing Strategies](#) and [Problem-Solving Strategies](#) to help students better regulate their emotions, think through challenging situations, and build healthy relationships, friendships and community. See the [RAK Educator Guide](#) for more information about incorporating those strategies into the unit.

Establishing kindness as the norm in your classroom positively influences classroom culture. By setting kindness as the expected behavior and having everyone agree to that norm, your students gain responsibility for maintaining an environment that is kind to everyone

Revisiting the topics or questions raised during discussions regularly will expand student understanding of the concepts. Scripted explanations are provided, but feel free to use language that feels natural for you.

The Common Core, 21st Century, SEL and Colorado P-12 Academic Standards met in this unit are listed at the start of each lesson. A [Learning Standards Key](#) is provided on the website for your reference.

