

Communication Games and Active Listening Activities for Teams

Practice listening, clarification, and concise summaries with short fictional tasks that do not assess employees or require personal disclosure.

Host guide / Letter / Pairs or groups of 3–8 adults; use circles for larger teams / 8–20 minutes per activity

Read the guide privately first if this activity has hidden answers. Print single-sided at Actual size / 100%. Cut only sheets marked CARDS. Keep answer keys with the host.

What you need

- Plain paper or a shared text document.
- Optional neutral scenario cards and timer.
- No personal stories, physical contact, special equipment, or software required.

How to run it

1. Choose one practice card and read the scenario in advance. Replace any example that resembles confidential or sensitive work.
2. Explain the communication move the activity will practice and demonstrate the time limit. Tell participants they may pass, observe, or switch to writing.
3. Form pairs or small groups by choice. Give everyone a moment to read the prompt before discussion starts.
4. Run one short round, then let participants switch roles only if they want to. Keep comments focused on the task rather than evaluating a person.
5. Close with one optional reflection question about the instructions or the conversation pattern. Do not use the exercise to rate employees, diagnose listening, or infer a team outcome.

Practice one move at a time

Active listening in this guide means a simple observable action: let someone finish, summarize what you heard, ask a clarifying question, or check whether your summary matches. The activity does not claim to measure empathy or predict how a team performs. It offers a low-stakes way to try a conversation structure.

Choose one card rather than combining several rules. Give participants the full instruction before starting so the task does not become a surprise test. If the prompt feels too close to real work, use one of the fictional examples or skip the card.

Keep scenarios neutral

Use made-up event planning, a public sign, or a fictional schedule. Do not ask people to discuss conflict, performance feedback, family, health, identity, or confidential projects. If a participant begins sharing something private, pause the activity and let them decide whether to continue.

A person can participate as speaker, listener, note-taker, observer, or host. A pass is complete and does not require explanation. For an accessible alternative, let people write a summary or question before anyone speaks.

Facilitate without scoring

Do not award points for accurate paraphrases or call a person “good” or “bad” at listening. In a short exercise, the task, wording, time limit, and familiarity all affect what happens. Ask what instruction made the exercise clear instead of interpreting a result.

If the activity produces a revised message or summary, treat it as a draft. Keep it only if the group wants to use it; otherwise discard it at the end.

Printable host script

“We will try one short communication practice. The scenario is fictional. You may speak, write, observe, or pass. We are not scoring people or assessing work skills. Focus on the one conversation move on the card, then we will stop.”

At the end ask: “What part of the instruction helped you follow the task?” Participants can answer, write, or pass. Close by thanking the group and moving to the next agenda item.

Use the eight activity cards

The cards cover summaries, clarification questions, sequencing, neutral rewriting, and listening before proposing a solution. Each can be run with paper or in an existing meeting. The durations are planning estimates; add thinking time or stop early when participants prefer.

For hybrid groups, give remote participants a written prompt and a clear way to contribute by audio or chat. Avoid side conversations that people on the call cannot hear.

CARDS / Communication Games and Active Listening Activities for Teams

<p>WG04-001 / Communication practice activity</p> <p>Paraphrase and check</p>	<p>WG04-002 / Communication practice activity</p> <p>Clarify before choosing</p>
<p>WG04-003 / Communication practice activity</p> <p>Three-step summary relay</p>	<p>WG04-004 / Communication practice activity</p> <p>Question before suggestion</p>
<p>WG04-005 / Communication practice activity</p> <p>Rewrite a vague notice</p>	<p>WG04-006 / Communication practice activity</p> <p>Fact, assumption, question</p>

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<p>WG04-007 / Communication practice activity</p> <p>Listening without interruption</p>	<p>WG04-008 / Communication practice activity</p> <p>One instruction, two readings</p>
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Host answer key

Keep this section separate from player cards. Accept equivalent wording where the meaning matches.

01. Group: pair. Materials: none. Time: 8 minutes. First scenario: Speaker A describes a fictional community event using three facts—the event is indoors, it has two activity tables, and it ends at 4 p.m. Listener B gives a one-sentence summary, then asks “Did I get that right?” A corrects or confirms. Switch roles for a second scenario: a public workshop starts at 2 p.m., has three demonstration stations, and uses the west entrance. The new listener summarizes and checks.

Use only the supplied details. The aim is to try a summary and check, not to infer feelings or score accuracy.

02. Group: 3–6. Materials: paper. Time: 10 minutes. Read this fictional note: “Move the display near the front before lunch.” The group writes at least three questions that would clarify the location, deadline, and person responsible. Only after the questions are listed may the group propose a plan.

There is no hidden answer. Keep the exercise about what information is missing, not who should have known.

03. Group: 3–5. Materials: host reads a short fictional sequence: “A visitor arrives, asks for the printed guide, takes a seat, and later joins a demonstration.” Time: 10 minutes. Person one summarizes the sequence in one sentence; the next person adds one detail that was left out; the host rereads the original. Repeat with roles if desired.

Participants may write instead of speaking. Do not rank summaries or compare memory.

04. Group: pair. Materials: scenario card: “A fictional community event has fewer chairs than expected.” Time: 10 minutes. Speaker describes the situation for one minute. Listener asks one open clarifying question before offering any idea. Speaker answers only what they choose; listener repeats the constraint they heard, then the pair switches roles.

This is a practice turn, not a real logistics recommendation. A participant may pass or use a written response.

05. Group: 3–6. Materials: paper and pen. Time: 12 minutes. Start with the fictional notice “The room is ready soon; please bring the things.” Rewrite it to say who should arrive, where to meet, when, and what to bring. Mark any detail that cannot be inferred and leave it as a question instead of inventing a fact.

The activity practices clarity in a made-up message; it does not rate anyone’s writing.

06. Group: 3–6. Materials: three column headings on paper. Time: 12 minutes. Read: “The community display opens Friday. A poster mentions a short welcome. Some visitors may arrive early.” Place each statement in fact, assumption, or question. Add one question before deciding what the host should do.

Accept reasonable differences if a sentence is ambiguous. The purpose is to surface uncertainty without blaming a speaker.

07. Group: pair. Materials: neutral topic card, such as “plan a fictional book fair table.” Time: 8 minutes. Person A speaks for up to 60 seconds about one choice for the table. Person B listens without interrupting, then summarizes one detail. A may correct the summary or pass. Switch roles.

The speaker may use the supplied scenario and need not share personal information. No eye contact or camera use is required.

08. Group: 3–6. Materials: written sentence: “Place the small sign beside the table after the welcome.” Time: 10 minutes. Each person privately writes what they think the instruction means. Compare answers, then list words that could be more specific. Rewrite one sentence together and leave any unknown details as questions.

There is no right interpretation when the instruction is ambiguous. Keep the revision fictional and do not connect it to an employee’s performance.

Hosting questions

Are these listening assessments?

No. They are brief practice activities and should not be used to score or evaluate employees.

Do participants need to share a personal story?

No. Every activity uses a fictional scenario, and people may observe, write, or pass.

Can these activities be done remotely?

Yes. Share the prompt in text and allow audio or chat responses. Keep cameras optional and make sure remote participants can hear the discussion.

How many activities should a meeting use?

Choose one short card that fits the time. The activities are independent; there is no need to complete all eight.

Original AI-assisted resource with AI editorial review. Independent human playtesting and physical printing have not been completed. Answer, listen, or pass.