

Listen Up, Tia!



BOOK 4

Grades 2–3 | Ages 7–9
Skill: Listening



LESSON 4

Listen Up, Tia!

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1

Students will demonstrate focus and listening without interrupting.
(B1.3.b)

2

Students will practice respectful communication by listening carefully to others and repeat accurately.
(D11.b)

3

Students will reflect on how listening helps them understand others' feelings, and experiences.
(C1.2.b)



Scan here to discover activities and other resources to go along with this book, or visit mindbodyalign.com/qr/7m66v



Summary of Lesson

In this lesson, students explore what it means to truly listen using their whole body, mind, and heart. Through the story, *Listen Up, Tia* and the Telephone game, students practice focused attention, patience, and respectful communication. Students learn that listening is an important part of showing kindness, empathy, and cooperation. This lesson encourages students to become better listeners and to apply active listening in real-life situations at school and beyond.

Materials

Activity Page #4

Mindful Listening
Poster

Guiding Questions

What does it mean to be a good listener, and how is that different from just hearing sounds?

How does careful listening help us understand others and build stronger friendships?

What happens when we don't listen closely—and how can we practice getting better at it?



Vocabulary

1. **apologize:** to say you're sorry when you've done something that may have hurt or upset someone
2. **goals:** something you want to learn or do, and you try your best to make it happen
3. **horizon:** the line where the sky and the ground (or water) seem to meet when you look far away
4. **impatient:** feeling frustrated or upset because you don't want to wait more people talk and listen to each other
5. **interrupt:** to stop someone from speaking by talking or doing something before they are finished

Teacher Reflection

I believe that self-reflection and mindful listening help me stay flexible, present, and responsive to my students' needs, allowing me to serve them with greater empathy and intention.

How can I become more aware of how my presence, tone, and listening habits shape the way my students feel, engage, and respond in the classroom?

How do I model and support well-being—both for myself and my students—by practicing full attention, active listening, and intentional pauses throughout the day?



Introduction

Raise your hand if someone has ever said to you, 'Are you listening?'

Now raise your hand if you've said that to someone else!

(allow sharing)

Listening is more than just hearing words—it's paying attention with your whole body and brain. Today we're going to find out why listening is such a powerful way to show kindness and respect.

Look at our Mindful Listening poster! This poster helps us remember how to be really good listeners—not just with our ears, but with our whole body.

Here's what we do when we're mindful listeners:

- Eyes are watching the speaker.
- Ears are listening carefully.
- Brain is thinking about what's being said.
- Heart is caring—we're being kind and respectful.
- Body is calm and still, showing that we're ready to listen.

When we listen like this, we help others feel heard, and we learn so much more!

Let's play a game. When I say 'statue ears,' you freeze your body and show me your listening pose—eyes on the speaker, body still, ears open. Ready?

Call out silly versions of the phrase like:

- Banana ears! (*Students giggle but don't move*)
- Statue ears! (*Students freeze in listening pose*)

(Repeat 2–3 times for fun and to practice self-regulation.)

Let's pay close attention while we listen to the story. I'm going to ask you how Tia uses her listening skills, and how it helps her understand her friends.

Listening takes practice—and the more we do it, the easier it gets.





LISTEN UP, TIA!

BOOK 4

After a sunny day in the labyrinth, the sun is starting to set over the **horizon**.

Tia the butterfly is sitting out on a warm rock in her pajamas with her journal, sipping a cup of her favorite mud tea. She's writing **goals** for tomorrow and making a list of things she wants to do.

As she is writing, she looks up and notices her lightning bug pals buzzing around, playing a game of hide-and-seek.

That looks like fun! Tia thinks. Maybe I'll go join them!







Tia puts down her journal, gets dressed, and runs out the door, ready to join in the fun.



When Tia finds the lightning bugs, she sees that they're not playing anymore. They're all just sitting around talking.

“Hey,” Tia interrupts. “Why did you stop? Can we start again? I want to play!”

The lightning bugs tell Tia that they’re taking a small break, but she’s welcome to join their chat as they rest.







Larry Lightning Bug starts telling a story, and Tia, feeling **impatient**, interrupts again.

“When are you going to start playing?” she asks.

Larry says that it’ll be just a few more minutes and continues his story where he left off.





Tia is annoyed with all this talking.

Just as she begins to **interrupt** again,
she feels a tap, tap, tap on her shoulder.

She looks up and sees Tree.

Leaning in to whisper, Tree says,
“Tia, when you’re ready, come see me.
I have something to teach you, if you
would like to learn.”





Tia tells the lightning bugs she will
come back when they are ready to play.

Then, she flies off to see Tree.





Tia flutters up to eye level with Tree. “What did you want to teach me?” she asks.

Tree responds with a question. “Can you tell me what the lightning bugs were talking about, Tia?”

Tia has no answer. “I have no idea. I wasn’t really listening. I just wanted them to stop talking so we could play.”

“That’s what I thought,” Tree says.





Tree explains to Tia, “The lightning bugs were having a friendly conversation. They were sharing things about themselves and talking about things that were important to them.”

As Tia listens to Tree, she realizes she wasn’t being a good listener to her friends. Tree reminds her of all the times her friends listened to her and all the times she listened to Dwight.



Tree tells Tia, “Paying attention when someone is talking is called mindful listening. Listening can help you understand and get to know friends. It shows them that you care about their feelings in the same way that you want others to care about your feelings. This can help us understand them, get to know them better, and be better friends by caring about their feelings just the way we want others to care about ours.”







Tia thinks about this for a moment and says,
“Thanks for always being a mindful listener
to me, Tree. You’re a great friend.”

Tree gives Tia a pat on the head and replies,
“Thank you, Tia! Do you want to know some
tricks to become a more mindful listener?”

Tia nods.



“To be a mindful listener, we need to show that we are listening by using our whole body,” Tree explains.

“Turn your face to the person who is talking. Fix your eyes on their face or eyes. Nod your head and smile to show you understand. Keep your body still and quiet. Lastly, pause and wait for your turn to talk and ask questions.”







After hearing this, Tia decides she wants to **apologize**. She heads back to the lightning bugs and sees they've started playing hide-and-seek again.

She hides behind the leaves, joining the game for a moment as she waits for a good time to speak with them.



Once everyone has been found, they gather to take another break.

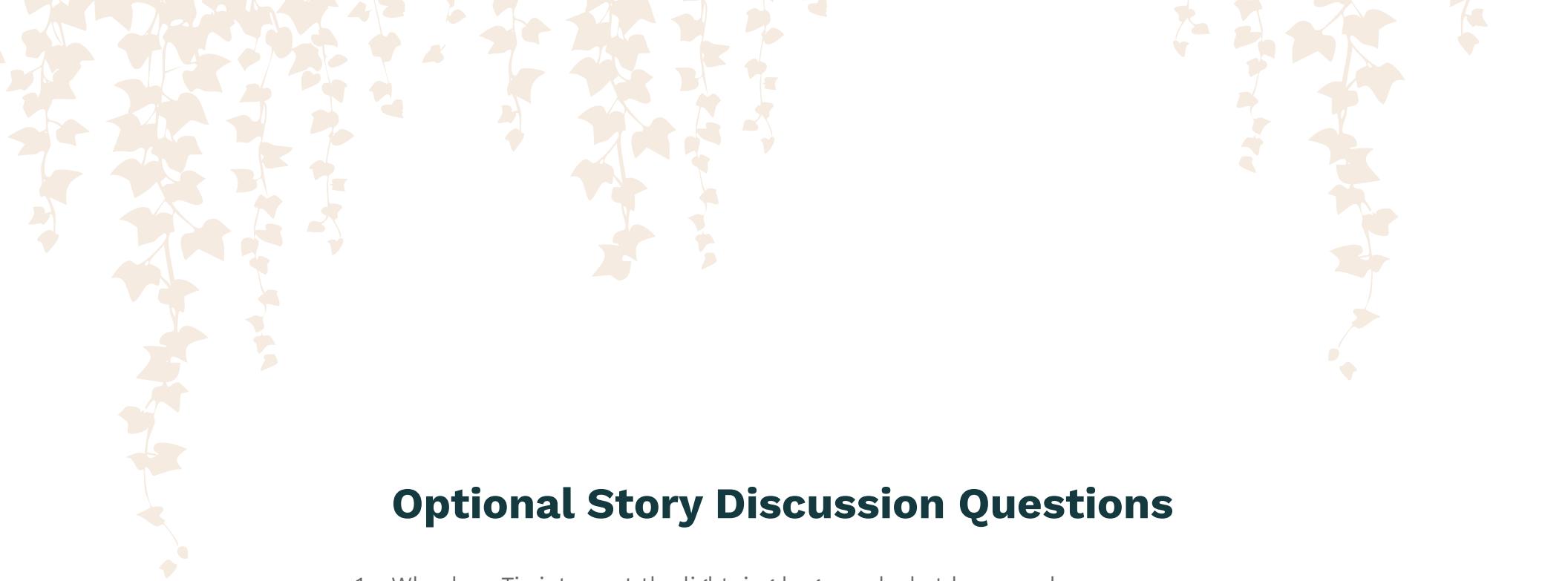
Tia begins her apology and says, “I’m sorry I wasn’t being a mindful listener when you were all talking.” Turning to Larry Lightning Bug, she adds, “I would love to hear that story you were telling earlier. Do you think you could start it from the beginning for me?”

Larry smiles and jumps right back into the story, clearly excited to have an excuse to tell it one more time.

Tia leans forward, listening with her whole body. She is ready to hear the story as a mindful listener this time—and she’s eager to be a mindful listener every time from now on.







Optional Story Discussion Questions

1. Why does Tia interrupt the lightning bugs, and what happens because of her behavior?
2. Let's talk about how to listen mindfully. What are some important things to do when we're listening?
3. Why is it so important to listen carefully when we want to be good friends?



Practice | Telephone Time!

We're going to play a game called Telephone to practice careful listening. This game shows us how important it is to pay close attention to what someone is saying.

(Have the class sit in a circle or line.)

I'll whisper a short message to the first person. Then, that person whispers it to the next, and so on—until it reaches the last person in the circle. The last person will say it out loud... and we'll see how close it is to the original message!

1. Choose a simple, silly sentence (5–8 words).

Examples: *The purple penguin danced on a pizza.*
My grandma rides a scooter made of jellybeans.
Elephants wear fuzzy socks on Fridays.

Or read a list of 4–6 items slowly and clearly. Example:
apple, book, rainbow, soccer ball, pencil

2. Whisper it only once to the first student.
3. The sentence is passed along the line, one student at a time.

4. The last student says the sentence out loud to the class.
5. Reveal the original sentence. Repeat with a new sentence or list.

What helped you listen carefully?

(allow sharing)

Why is it important to listen closely in real life?

(allow sharing)



Notes for Teacher

Acknowledge that listening and communication styles can vary across cultures. Make space for different ways of showing attention (e.g., eye contact may not be expected in all cultures). Invite students to share how people in their families or communities show they are listening.

Wrap Up

Today, we learned that listening helps us understand others, make friends, and be kind. **Listening takes practice—and the more we do it, the easier it gets.**

Let's think: Where in real life do we need to be good listeners?

(allow sharing)

Your challenge today is to use your statue ears just once—maybe with a teacher, a classmate, or someone at home. Show them you care just by listening.

Optional Lesson Discussion Questions

1. How did Tia show she was really listening to her friends in the story?
2. What was challenging or fun about listening carefully during the Telephone game?
3. When is a time in real life when it's really important to listen carefully?

Assessment

1. Did students demonstrate the ability to listen carefully during the story and group activities?
2. Were students able to explain or show how listening helps them understand others' ideas or feelings?
3. Did students practice respectful communication by taking turns and not interrupting?



Name: _____

Diagram of a Mindful Listener

Match the descriptions of a mindful listener to body parts in the drawing on the right.

Hands in lap

Raise hand to talk

Ears listening

Mouth waiting to talk

Eyes watching

Quiet feet



FAMILY CONNECTION!

Ask your student to show you how to be an active listener and play the game "telephone" to practice.
A summary of today's lesson!

Lesson 4: Listen Up, Tia!



4



Activity Page

Download the activity page to accompany this lesson by scanning the QR code or visiting mindbodyalign.com/qr/7m66v



Grades 2–3

Choose your next Labyrinth Adventure!

Tia and her friends are on a journey—and you can come too! Each story in the Labyrinth Adventures series helps young learners explore emotions, build focus, and practice making thoughtful choices.

Keep the adventure going! Discover more at MindBodyAlign.com





Want more adventures?

Explore our Labyrinth Adventures storybook series for Kindergarten and 1st Grade



Step into a world of adventure, self-discovery, and lifelong learning

In these beautifully crafted stories, children meet new friends like Lily the ladybug and Oliver the owl as they journey through the labyrinth—a gentle world filled with discovery, kindness, and emotional growth.

Each K-1 story introduces focused attention strategies, self-awareness tools, and calming techniques in ways that are playful and developmentally appropriate.

Perfect for getting started!

In the Classroom – These earlier-level stories support the same key skills—focus, emotional regulation, and thoughtful choices—using simple language and interactive prompts designed for young learners.

At Home – Families often choose the K-1 stories for bedtime, quiet time, or moments when children need help calming down.



Inside the Labyrinth



Annamarie Fernyak

FOUNDER AND CEO

Founder and CEO of Mind Body Align and co-author of Labyrinth Adventures, a 32-book series rooted in mindful living, and emotional awareness. Drawing inspiration from a labyrinth on her farm, the series helps young learners develop focus and self-regulation. Annamarie also authored *The Right Side of Happiness*, exploring intentional living. When not writing or collaborating with educators, she travels the U.S. in an Airstream, hiking and spending time with family—living her belief that meaningful learning engages both heart and mind.



Julie Braumberger

DIRECTOR OF WELLNESS EDUCATION

Director of Wellness Education at Mind Body Align, co-authored Labyrinth Adventures and helped design its social-emotional curriculum. A certified K-8 educator with 20+ years of teaching experience, Julie now develops focus-building techniques to help students thrive. She created a widely respected school-based program to reduce stress and support emotional regulation. As a leader with SEL4OH, she regularly writes and speaks on key educational topics. Julie enjoys time with her family in Ohio, reading, walking the beach, and exploring new places.



Art Mawhinney

ILLUSTRATOR

A seasoned illustrator and storyboard artist who has brought characters to life across more than 100 children's books and over 150 television shows, including *Rugrats*. Trained in animation at CalArts, Art has worked with leading names like Disney, Pixar, Nickelodeon, Marvel, and *Star Wars*. His passion for cartoon and comic art began early and has only grown through years of creative work. Illustrating Tia, Dwight, and the rest of the labyrinth friends has been one of his most rewarding—and fun—experiences yet.



Mind Body Align offers science-informed strategies that support the wellbeing of educators and students by integrating focused attention, emotional regulation, and self-awareness into everyday learning. Our solutions are designed with educators in mind and provide real-world tools that strengthen focus, build healthier school climates, and foster a sense of calm, connection, and readiness to learn. Schools using these strategies report increased engagement, fewer disruptions, improved attendance, and a greater sense of satisfaction among both students and teachers.



The Real Life Labyrinth

On an Ohio farm, beside a river and old trees, lies a real labyrinth garden where butterflies, grasshoppers, and ladybugs live among fragrant plants and rustling grasses.

My Labyrinth Notes

A space for thoughts, drawings, or little discoveries!

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“Listening can help you understand and get to know friends. It shows them that you care about their feelings in the same way that you want others to care about your feelings.”

Join Tia on a journey in the labyrinth as the sun sets and the lightning bugs play a game of hide-and-seek. Feeling the excitement, Tia rushes out to join them, but little does she know that her journey is about to take an unexpected turn. Tia discovers that being a good friend goes beyond playing games. With Tree’s guidance, she learns the art of mindful listening.

In this lesson, students explore what it means to truly listen using their whole body, mind, and heart. Through the story, *Listen Up, Tia* and the Telephone game, students practice focused attention, patience, and respectful communication. Students learn that listening is an important part of showing kindness, empathy, and cooperation. This lesson encourages students to become mindful listeners and to apply active listening in real-life situations at school and beyond.



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