



# Conversation Skills

## Time Sensitivity

Available in the format below:



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## Conversational Time Sensitivity

One of the most common conversational errors made by individuals on the autism spectrum (and many neurotypical individuals!) is overextending their conversational turns. Many factors can be involved in this kind of mistake, including limited listener presupposition skills, deficient perspective taking, and trouble evaluating a communicative partner's interest level. This activity provides practice with determining an appropriate time period for a conversational turn by taking into account the context and the conversational partner, and then conveying assigned semantic content accurately within that time period.

Following a written discussion on the need to be sensitive to a listener's time limit, students roll a die to be assigned hypothetical content (what to say) and a context (to whom they are speaking and in what situation). After considering the context, students estimate an appropriate time period, and then practice providing their assigned content within that time period. This social skills activity works on increasing students' awareness of their listener's needs (listener presupposition) and improving their ability to limit the time they use to convey their content in order to best fit those needs. I recommend combining this activity with *Kinesics: Interest vs. Disinterest* and *Editing Verbal Narratives*, as all three address the need to limit content in order to best suit the needs of communicative partners.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## TIME SENSITIVE TALKING

Often, we need to modify how we're going to say something depending on how much time we have to speak. We need to be sensitive to our listener's time limit. Maybe our listener is busy. Maybe he/she has to go somewhere. Maybe he/she has a lot of tasks to get done. Maybe he/she wants to talk to others. Maybe he/she is getting bored because you are going into too much detail.

Roll the die to find out what you need to say (the content). If you roll a two, three, or four you will need to fill in the blank. Then roll the die again to find out to whom and in what situation you will be speaking. First estimate for how many seconds you should speak given the context and explain why. Then say what you need to say within that time frame.

### Content: What You Need to Say

- 1) Tell about your weekend
- 2) Describe how to \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Explain why you \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) List the advantages of \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Tell about your best friend
- 6) Describe your most difficult school assignment

### Context: To Whom You Are Talking and the Situation

- 1) Your school principal stops to chat in the hallway between classes
- 2) Your host/hostess at a party
- 3) A job interviewer asks you for the information
- 4) Your mom while she's driving you to soccer practice
- 5) Your guidance counselor in the school cafeteria
- 6) Your cousin at a family wedding