

Name: _____ Date: _____

Sending and Receiving Messages When Speaking and Listening

Sometimes when you talk, you send messages not only with your words, but also with your body language and tone of voice. Sometimes a speaker says one thing, and the listener hears something else. How do people assign meaning to messages received? How can speakers make themselves clear?

A. Read aloud the scene below with a partner or small group. Then discuss the questions that follow.

Maria: You guys! This is an emergency!
The people looking at Maria see she has a button from her jacket in her hand.

1. What do Maria's words indicate?
2. What really happened?
3. Is Maria serious? How might Maria's message be intended?
4. How might the listeners' receive her message?

B. Read aloud the scene below with a partner or small group. Then discuss the questions that follow.

Anita: Hey, Freddie, do you like this dress on me?
Freddie: Yeah, that dress looks really *great*.

1. What is Anita asking for?
2. What do Freddie's words indicate?
3. What might Freddie intend for his reply to mean?
4. Discuss the direction this conversation might take, depending on what is intended by each speaker.

C. Write a Dialogue

With a partner, think of a familiar setting, such as a cafeteria or a classroom. Devise a situation, such as studying for a test, eating lunch, or making a project. Create two speakers. Write out eight lines of dialogue to read aloud. Include sentences that seem to convey one meaning, but when spoken might convey something else to the listener. Refer to the examples above to help you.

Once you have finished, exchange dialogues with another pair. Take turns reading the dialogues aloud. Ask the writers what they intended, and try to speak the lines that way. Discuss how speakers can work to send messages that a listener can understand.