

## LESSON GUIDE

# 2012 SOCIAL SKILLS CINEMA CONTEST: LESSONS FOR THE REAL WORLD

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**Title:** Off-Topic/On-Topic

**School:** Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind

**Year:** 2012

**Length:** 4.00 minutes

**Grade Level:** 7<sup>th</sup>—12<sup>th</sup>

**Creative Developer:**

**Julie Novak, Certified Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (CTVI)**

### **Abstract and Specific Purpose of the Lesson:**

Students will recognize off-topic and on-topic conversational comments and questions.

Students will become more familiar with how to build conversations with peers and adults. The end goal is for the students to carry these social skill strategies into real life.

### **Meet the Actors:**

Nick F., age 12

Alicia M., age 13

Laura N., age 13

Nathan C., age 14

Martin P., age 17

### **Lesson Topic:**

Recognizing On-Topic/Off-Topic Conversations

### **Instructional Goal:**

In 36 instructional weeks, when presented with communication scenarios with peers, the student will engage in five two-minute conversations related to one topic with 85% accuracy in four of the five trials.

**Objectives:** Student will...

### **Objective 1:**

Accurately state his/her peers' names and use appropriate greetings, such as: "Hi," "How are you?," and/or "Where are you going?"

### **Criterion:**

Achieve 100% accuracy, three out of five trials.

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### **Objective 2:**

Maintain a two-minute conversation daily with another peer or adult using information-seeking questions and staying on-topic.

### **Criterion:**

Score a three or better when graded according to five-trait quality rubric with 0-3 prompts.

### **Steps to Use in Teaching the Lesson (you may select your own group of songs):**

1. Introduce the song, "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."
2. Ask students, "What is the topic of this song?"
3. Introduce the song, "Sweet Home Colorado."
4. Ask students, "What is the topic of the song?"
5. Ask students, "Can you find the off-topic lyric in my next song?" Add an odd phrase to the song you select.
6. Ask students, "Why did that lyric sound funny to you?"
7. Sing "Keep on the Sunnyside" and insert lyrics that are off-topic from the main idea of the song.
8. Relate songs to conversations with friends and family. Good conversations, like songs, usually have topics that are of common interest to the participants. Often good conversations also have a flow, and they do not jump to different topics.
9. Students create a two-minute conversation related to one topic that they select from a list given by the teacher.
10. Students are given opportunities to demonstrate the skill.

### **Materials Needed:**

You will need a guitar, pre-recorded song/music by teacher, or CD. Students should be in a circle or at a large round table.

### **Progress Notes/Comments/Modifications:**

In the full-length lesson, all of the students were able to identify on-topic and off-topic lyrics in previously learned songs. They were able to transfer this skill to actual conversations when not taking an active role in the conversation. However, when participating in a conversation on their own, it was more challenging for the students to stay on-topic. As you see in the video, Laura was challenged by staying on one topic and making sure the conversation flowed between her and Martin.

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When Martin noticed the conversation veered from the topic of “music,” he verbally prompted her to stay on topic. After taping, teachers reinforced with Martin that it was not appropriate to say “off-topic” in the middle of the conversation even though he was correct that she was off-topic. They asked him to reflect and share how he could have interjected a prompt to Laura without calling out the error.

#### **Data Collection:**

One way to collect data is using a quality rubric for each student with the skills to be mastered in a four-to-one rubric guide, with four being preferred behavior to master the objective and one being unable to master the objective.

#### **Next Steps:**

1. Build more opportunities for students to experience the steps to taking turns in a conversation.
2. Build lessons that focus upon the “rhythm” of a conversation and equate this to a tennis match where the conversation does not stay on one side of the court.