

A Note To Parents and Educators

Unnecessary interrupting is an annoying behavior that is quite common in the classroom. Most students don't intend to be rude when they interrupt. They just believe they have something to say, and their need to get an immediate point across outweighs the will to control their response.

Interrupting is a behavior children learn at a young age. Early in life, all children believe the entire world revolves around them. This egocentric mindset encourages impulsive thinking and consequently leads to interrupting as a way of meeting the child's immediate needs or wants.

Older children and adults interrupt for various reasons. They may like being the center of attention, they may not have the ability or desire to curb their impulsiveness, they may be convinced they need to "blurt out" an immediate solution to a problem, or they may have just plain old "bad manners." Whatever the reason, interrupting is detrimental to the development of good interpersonal relationships. When people interrupt, they send the message that the ideas and thoughts of others are less important than theirs.

Parents and teachers attempt to discourage interrupting but often find themselves responding to the interrupting child, which in turn may perpetuate the problem.

This workbook is designed to offer students "hands on" activities that explore interrupting. The activities address the reasons people interrupt, when interrupting is necessary, how unnecessary interrupting makes people feel, how to interrupt politely, and how and when to stop yourself from interrupting.

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ISBN: 978-1-931636-91-9

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Summary: A supplementary teacher's guide for *My Mouth Is A Volcano*. Full of discussion questions and exercises to share with students.

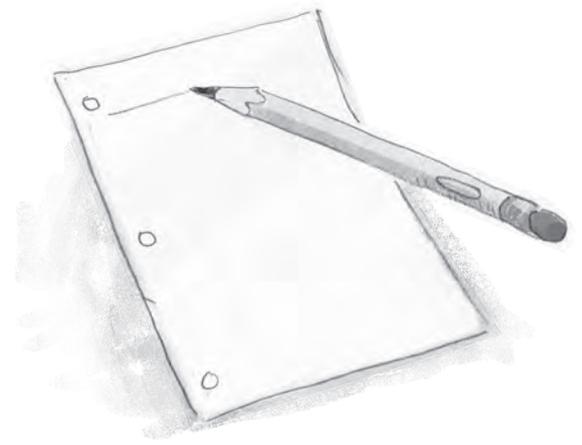
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Published by National Center for Youth Issues

Printed at Starkey Printing • Chattanooga, TN, USA • May 2018

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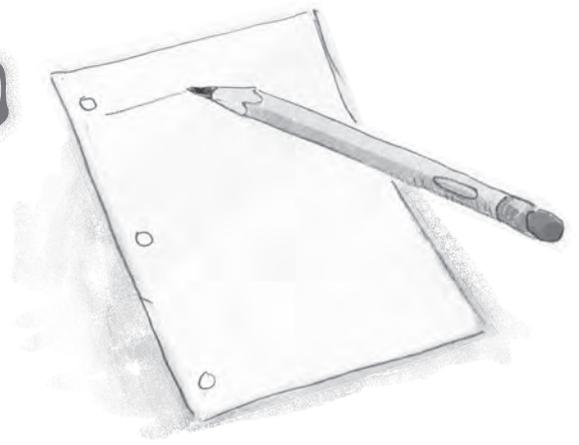
THINK ABOUT IT...



Someone Interrupted Me!

1. Write about a time when someone interrupted you.
2. How did that make you feel?
3. What did you think of the person who interrupted?
4. Was the interruption necessary? Why or why not?
5. Could the person who interrupted you have handled the situation differently?
If so, what could he or she have done?

THINK ABOUT IT... TOO



I Interrupted Someone Else!

1. Write about a time when you interrupted someone.
2. Why did you do it?
3. How did you feel right after you did it?
4. Was the interruption necessary?
5. What could you have done instead of interrupting?
6. If you could do it all over again, would you still have interrupted? Why or why not?

PUZZLE ERUPT

This activity is designed to allow students to feel the frustrations associated with being interrupted. If they can develop an understanding of what it feels like to be interrupted, they may think twice before interrupting others.

Materials Needed

- Several 100-piece jigsaw puzzles (enough for approximately 4 kids to puzzle)
- Floor Space
- Desirable reward for winning team (extra recess time, milkshake pass, candy bars, etc.)

Directions

1. Divide the class into teams of 4 to 5.
2. Give each team a puzzle and explain that they are to work together to complete the puzzle. The first team to complete the puzzle wins the reward (the puzzles must remain in their boxes until you say GO!).
3. Once the students are engaged in this activity, begin interrupting them! Use several of the following strategies, or think of others that uniquely fit your classroom. The more interruptions, the more effective this activity will be.

Interrupting Strategies

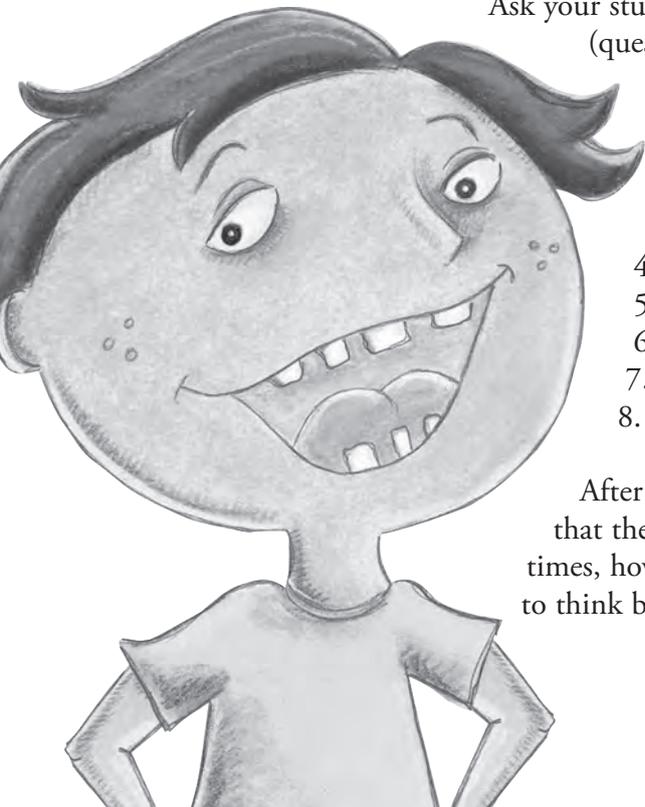
- Pull two involved students from one group and place them in another group. Repeat several times.
- Pull two involved students from a group and talk with them about an irrelevant previous or upcoming assignment.
- Shut off your classroom lights and say, “OOPS! I accidentally hit the switch.”
- Call the entire class to attention and discuss with them an irrelevant detail about an upcoming event.
- Pre-arrange several interruptions from the office.
- Start this activity just prior to a scheduled fire drill.
- Start singing.
- Tell students their time is up before they have had a chance to complete their puzzles and then attempt to move on to another activity.

Classroom Discussion

Ask your students the following questions and discuss the answers as a class (questions may vary so that they fit the interruption strategies used).

1. How did it make you feel when I took you from your group and moved you to another group? How did your group react?
2. How did you feel when I pulled you out of your group and asked you questions?
3. Did my questions have anything to do with the class activity?
4. Could those questions have been asked at a better time?
5. When the fire alarm went off, how did you feel?
6. Was this interruption necessary or important? Why?
7. When I started to sing, how did you react? What did you think about?
8. When I tried to change activities before you were finished, how did you feel? Was my interruption necessary? Could it have been avoided?

After exploring these questions with your students, arrive at the conclusion that there are times when interrupting is necessary (fire drills, etc.). Other times, however, interrupting is irritating and unnecessary. Discuss how stopping to think before you speak can help reduce interrupting.

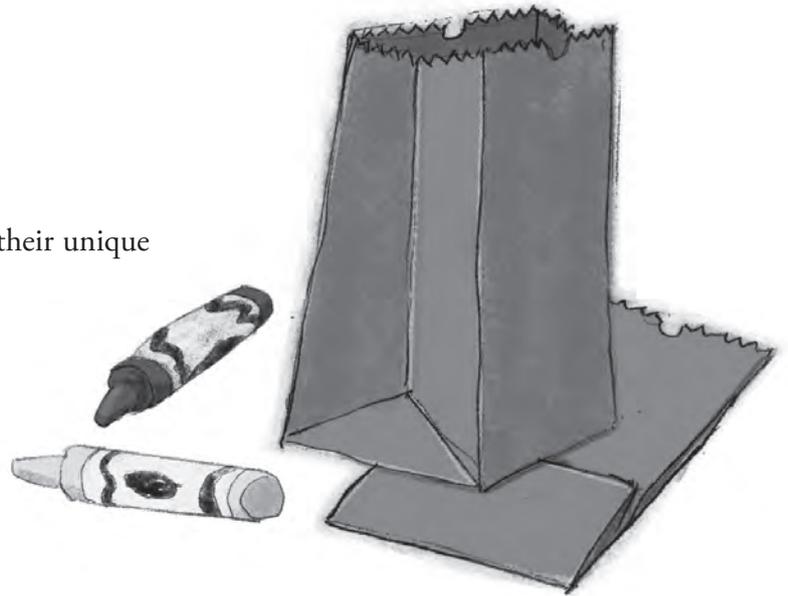


ABILITY BAGS

This activity will give students the opportunity to share their unique abilities and practice their good listening skills.

Materials Needed

- One small paper sack for each child (lunch bag size)
- Crayons and markers



Directions

1. Have students colorfully decorate their bags with the words “My Ability Bag!”
2. Instruct students to fill their bag with five items from home that represent their abilities. Examples include: a picture of a younger sibling (the ability to be a great big brother), a favorite book (the ability to be a good reader), or a craft (the ability to make things).
3. Send bags home along with the parent letter (next page). Copy the letter and cut in half giving one letter to each student. Make sure to specify when you need the ability bags filled and returned.
4. When all the students have returned their bags, have them sit in a circle with their bags on the floor in front of them. Placing the bags in their laps may cause too many distractions.
5. Have students take turns removing one item from their bag and explaining it to the class by saying, “I have the ability to _____.”
6. Practice good listening skills and praise students for not interrupting. If interrupting does take place, kindly explain to students that since what they are saying is not an emergency, they will have to wait their turn.
7. After everyone has shared their abilities, ask students to recall the abilities of their classmates. Point out similarities of abilities and celebrate uniqueness among your students.

Note

Ability bags are a great way for students and teachers to get to know each other. This activity helps students respect others, develop good listening skills, and break the habit of interrupting.

It may work well for older children to share all five abilities at one time before moving on to the next student. Younger children, however, respond more effectively to sharing one item at a time and rotating through the circle five times.

Allow students who fail to return their ability bags in time to fill another bag with items from your classroom that represent personal strengths and abilities.



Dear Parents,

Today, your child is bringing home their ABILITY BAG.

Please help your child fill it with 5 items that symbolize their abilities (for example, a picture of a younger sibling may symbolize the ability to be a GREAT big brother or a craft your child has made could represent the ability to make things). Each child will share their abilities with the class.



Please make sure that all items fit in the bag. All items will be placed back in the ability bags as soon as they are shared and will be returned home that day.

This activity will help our class develop better listening skills, help us appreciate and celebrate our unique differences, and give us all a chance to learn more about each other.

We will be sharing our ability bags on: _____.

Please make sure your child brings their bag prior to our sharing date. Bags will be collected as they are brought in and saved until our special day.



Dear Parents,

Today, your child is bringing home their ABILITY BAG.

Please help your child fill it with 5 items that symbolize their abilities (for example, a picture of a younger sibling may symbolize the ability to be a GREAT big brother or a craft your child has made could represent the ability to make things). Each child will share their abilities with the class.



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DESIGN A VOLCANO T-SHIRT

Directions:

Use your creativity to design a T-Shirt for Louis to wear that will remind him not to interrupt. You may wish to cut these out and display them on a bulletin board.

Remember what Louis' mom told him to do when he wanted to interrupt:

“When your words are pushed into your teeth by your tongue...”

- Bite down really hard
- Breathe your words out through your nose
- Wait until the other person has finished talking and
- Breathe your words back into your mouth

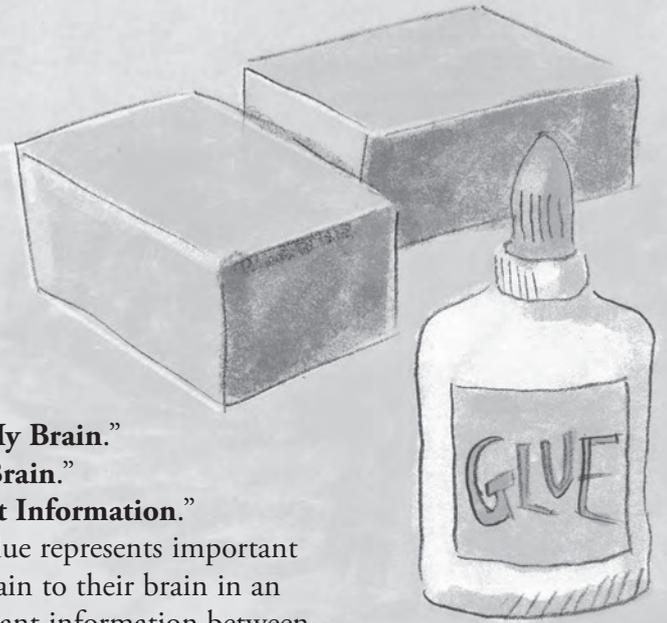


STICK TO IT!

The Purpose of “STICK TO IT!” is to give your students a visual representation of how interrupting affects learning in school and communicating with friends.

Materials Needed:

- Light-weight wooden blocks
- Markers
- Glue



Directions:

1. Using markers, label two blocks “**My Brain.**”
2. Label the other two blocks “**Your Brain.**”
3. Label the bottle of glue “**Important Information.**”
Explain to your students that the glue represents important information traveling from your brain to their brain in an educational environment or important information between friends in a social environment.
4. Glue both sides of the blocks together. Leave one set alone and let it dry. This set represents situations in which you are teaching or friends are talking without being interrupted.
5. Take the other set of blocks and pull them apart several times throughout the drying process. Explain to your students that each time you pull the blocks apart, it represents an interruption. The first set of blocks will have a strong bond, which represents successful listening and learning. The second set of blocks will not be bonded and will have a weak bond with glue stuck on each block. This represents unsuccessful listening and learning, and incomplete communication.

