

Gibberish

Objective: Students will try to communicate a message to each other in gibberish.

Materials: Computer and projector with speakers, space to move, list of gibberish messages

Directions:

1. Learn about Gibberish

Watch examples of gibberish and read about principles of gibberish. Discuss what students notice.

- Babies Talking Gibberish [Runtime 11:13]
 - Compilation video of babies talking gibberish to their families
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXI_5Qps7eU (mild language at 8:20)
- How to Speak Gibberish
 - Basic principles
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/05/magazine/how-to-speak-gibberish.html>
- Stephen Colbert on Whose Line [Runtime 3:03]
 - Clip of Foreign Film Dub section of improv comedy show Whose Line Is It Anyway? Featuring Stephen Colbert
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Bf769rvds4>
- What Languages Sound Like to Foreigners [Runtime 1:44]
 - Popular YouTube Video (20M+ views) students are likely to encounter if doing their own research
 - Note: Inappropriate language in description of video.
 - Discuss why the R word is hurtful.
 - <https://www.r-word.org/r-word-effects-of-the-word.aspx>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=94&v=ybcvixivscw

2. Practice Gibberish with a Partner

- Arrange students into groups of two.
- Have them decide on one person to be Person A and one to be Person B.
- Have them spread out standing in the room.
- Tell them that they are going to have a very important message to communicate to their partner but that they must do it in gibberish. Gibberish is their own made up language that can incorporate any sounds as they’ve seen from example videos.
- Ask all the Person A’s to come join you and give them a message to communicate. This message can be of your own invention or from the list below.
- Do the same with Person B.

- Give the students 1-2 minutes to try and communicate their message to their partner and then proceed to the debrief questions.
- Near the end of the time, tell students that they have ten seconds to get their partner to understand their message.
- If students are enjoying themselves, try more than one of the pairs of messages below and give them the opportunity to change partners. The examples below are also available as a handout which can then be cut up and distributed to students.
- Students can also take turns presenting their gibberish scenes in front of the class.

Gibberish Messages

Person A	Person B
You're wearing my shirt/dress/pants/coat.	I just found this shirt/dress/pants/coat in my room.
I'm hungry. Let's go get a sandwich.	I think I'm coming down with the stomach flu.
Do you like my new perfume/cologne/scent?	It smells disgusting in here. Do you know what it is?
I just started reading a really great book.	My pet passed away last night.
My favourite colour is _____. What's yours?	Do you want to go to the museum?
What you said really hurt me.	I hate it when you do that.
Will you be my friend?	I want to be alone right now.
Show me how high you can jump.	I hurt my leg.
The teacher asked us to stay in the room.	Let's go outside and play!

3. Debrief Questions

- What do you think the other person was trying to communicate?
- Were you right?
- What made it difficult to understand the other person?
- What helped you to understand them?
- How did the time limit affect the way you were communicating?

This is an opportunity to discuss elements of communication which are not based in language fluency. Examples might include vocal elements such as tone, speed, volume, repetition or physical elements such as gesture, posture, eye contact, touch, distance between speakers.

Roseneath Theatre

From the study guide for “**Head À Tête**” 2018/2019 Season
a play written by David S. Craig and Robert Morgan

Discussion of the time limit at the end of the improvisation might include how outside pressures complicate communication.

Extension:

Learn structured gibberish to better understand syllables.

- Learn Gibberish 1: The Basics [Runtime 3:14]
 - Youth-produced gibberish instructional video
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vM2r5WcU0M>
- How To Speak Gibberish
 - WikiHow article
 - <https://www.wikihow.com/Speak-Gibberish>