

Young Leaders' Scheme

What did they say?



Module I

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The importance of good communication

Successful leadership relies on good communication. But what does this mean in practice? Communication is the act of sharing of information. There are many ways to share information, some of which are better than others.

Many things in life depend on good communications. For example:

- ◆ if you catch a bus or a train, you need to know at what time and from where it leaves, and when it will arrive. How is this information communicated to you? What would happen if there were no published timetables?
- ◆ when you get to the train station, the station announcer keeps you up to date on which platform each train will depart from. Have you ever been frustrated when the announcements are so garbled that you can't understand a word that is being said?

These are simple examples which demonstrate the value of good communication. Think of some other examples in your own experience.

As a Young Leader, good communication is essential. How will you understand what your Section members want without good communication? Remember communication is a two way process. You need to know what the young people want and enjoy, and this means you have to listen to them.

Listening to other people

Do you always feel that people listen to you? Do you always listen to what other people say to you?

Even when you think you have listened to someone you may not have taken in or understood what it is they are trying to say. Most people have played Chinese Whispers. In this game a simple message ("Peter likes fish on Tuesday, but Mary prefers beef") is passed from person to person by whispering, so that only the next person can hear it. The message, when it reaches the last person, often bears little resemblance to the original message. Try whispering the sentence above to the person next to you. Get him or her to pass it on in a similar way and so on. Ask the last person to say the message out loud.

Did the message change? Did the change of words alter the meaning? Why did this happen? Think about the different components of good communication. First the message has to be put across clearly, in a way that can be understood by the person listening, who must be listening in order to take it in.

So good communicating is not just about learning to talk to people, it also involves learning to listen to them.

Ways of communicating

There are many ways of passing on information. For example:

- ◆ talking to people face to face
- ◆ talking on the telephone
- ◆ writing instructions or messages
- ◆ text messaging
- ◆ using e-mail or the Internet.

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You may be able to think of other examples. Consider how these might be useful in different circumstances. What are the best ways of communicating with the young people in your Section? Whichever method you use will depend on the information you are trying to put across, but it is always important to give clear instructions, remembering that each individual will hear and understand things differently.

Imagine you are a Section Leader teaching a new game to the young people in a Section. Think of the things, which might affect the way they listen to you. How might you overcome these?

For example, is there background noise? Would it be easier to teach a few people at a time? Are there better ways of explaining the rules?

Considering the views of young people

Now that you have considered different ways of communicating, how might you use these to listen to the views and opinions of the young people in your Section? You might want to consider each of the following and think about how they might apply to your own Sections:

- Asking them to tell you when they have ideas about what they would like to do
- Asking them to discuss ideas in groups, then passing them on to you
- Encouraging them to tell you what they think of the activities they have done
- Setting up a regular meeting with some of the young people to hear their views and pass on information to them.

Consider what might best suit the young people in your Section.

Communicating in the Sections

Look in your Section *Essentials* file. Your Section Leader will have a copy. What are the mechanisms available for communicating with the young people in your section?

Look at:

- Involving children in decision making on page 28 of *Colony essentials*
- Pack Forum on page 26 of *Pack essentials*
- The Troop Forum on page 29 of *Troop essentials*

Making your views count

What role will you play in ensuring good communications in your Section? You may feel you have a useful role to play in communicating the views of the young people to the Section Leaders.

Consider how you might improve your own listening and communication skills.

What have you learned in this module?

Communication in both directions is key to the success of any Colony, Pack or Troop. You need to make young people understand you and you need to understand them! If this happens, you are more likely to deliver the fun experience that your Members are looking for. You will be happy in the knowledge that you have done a good job.