

SPEECH SKILLS 

# SoundBites

*The cards that get people talking . . . .*

For a free downloadable sampler pack visit  
[www.speechskills.com/soundbites](http://www.speechskills.com/soundbites)



**SoundBites cards give you a practice session in a box by combining fun with skill building.**

These creative, lighthearted speaking prompts encourage you to build your communication skills through a variety of tasks from storytelling to giving difficult feedback to simplifying a complex idea.

- Perfect for a lunchtime practice session
- Ideal as an icebreaker for your next team meeting
- Great as a creative conversation starter with friends

Play for two minutes or two hours with two to twenty players!

**Each of the four color-coded decks contains three unique games. Twelve distinctive communication games in all!**



## **"Personal File" Green Cards**

focus on sharing stories or personal points of view.



## **"Straight Talk" Blue Cards**

focus on delivering information in simple, concise language.



## **"Justifications" Purple Cards**

require the speaker to construct a creative argument.



## **"Grace Under Pressure" Orange Cards**

focus on finding the perfect words in challenging situations.

## **How to play:**

- Decide how the cards will be drawn. Options include:
  - The speaker draws from whichever colored deck he or she prefers.
  - All players draw from the same colored deck.
  - Players shuffle the colored decks together to give each speaker a random draw.
- Choose a timekeeper and set a time limit for the responses. We suggest limiting answers to 60 seconds for smaller groups and 30 seconds for larger groups.
- Invite the first speaker to draw a card, read the prompt aloud, and answer it.
- Alternate speakers until everyone has had a turn.
- Be supportive and have fun!



### How to raise the level of difficulty

At first, just finding the right words to answer the prompts can be challenge enough. If you are new to SoundBites, we suggest you spend a few rounds simply getting familiar with the format. However, when you are ready to raise the level of difficulty, try these ideas:

- Before drawing a card, invite the speaker to choose a specific speaking skill to focus on while answering. Strong posture, optimal volume, engaged eye contact, or eliminating filler words are excellent skills to begin with.
- Ask fellow players to offer constructive feedback on how well the speaker met his or her objective. What did the speaker do well? What might the speaker focus on next time to be more effective?
- Videotape the session and allow speakers to review their own videos to self-evaluate.

### Thirteen Ways to Jazz up Your Game

These 13 “add-ons” provide a simple twist to the basic game to make your practice sessions even more amusing and rewarding.

#### Knock Your Socks Off

To practice literally “keeping a level head,” each player answers a prompt while balancing a folded pair of socks on his or her head. Or better yet, have everyone balance socks on their heads for the entire round. Challenge the group to keep the expression and energy dynamic, without letting the socks fall.

#### Hands Up!

This game helps players learn what three to five seconds of eye contact feels like. At the start of each round, all listeners raise a hand as if asking a question. The speaker’s goal is to get all of the hands down by individually holding eye contact with each listener for at least three seconds. Once the speaker initiates eye contact, the listener should count silently to three before lowering his or her hand. If the speaker’s eyes dart away and come back, the listener should start counting again from one.

#### Snap Two

To master the skill of pausing, players snap their fingers twice at the end of each of their sentences. Or, select a fellow player to snap for the speaker. Be sure not to allow any accidental fillers within the pause.

#### Stand and Deliver

Instead of having players answer the prompt while seated, raise the level of difficulty by having everyone answer while standing at the front of the room. Be sure to focus on strong posture, strong voice, and strong eye contact.

#### Popsicle Stick Challenge

To master the clarity of articulation, players grip a Popsicle stick between their front teeth and speak as clearly as they can. By forcing the lips, jaw, and tongue to work especially hard, speakers train themselves to develop clean, crisp articulation. (Stir sticks, chopsticks, and pencils work equally well.)

# SPEECH SKILLS

# SoundBites

*The cards that get people talking . . . .*



## Filler Flag Game

While the speaker focuses on eliminating uses of “uh” and “um,” select one listener to briefly raise a hand to “flag” any accidental fillers. To keep it playful, you might even create a small orange penalty flag for the designated listener to wave.

## Penalty Duck

To help speakers eliminate an unconscious habit —such as playing with hair, cracking knuckles, or spinning a wedding ring— enlist the help of a little rubber duck or other squeaky toy. Every time the speaker slips into the accidental behavior, give a penalty squeak!

## Stack the Deck

Instead of drawing cards at random, have players selectively choose cards for each other to challenge weak spots.

## Fifteen-second Sound Bite

This variation requires everyone to answer the same prompt, but each answer must be completed in 15 seconds or less. It’s a great way to practice being concise.

## Emotional Roller Coaster

To help develop emotional range and expressiveness, players must draw two cards— an impromptu topic and an emotion to display while answering. A facilitator can create emotion cards ahead of time or have players jot down emotions on small slips of paper to be thrown into a hat. Some ideas include: surprise, sarcasm, jubilation, horror, playfulness, skepticism, pride, thankfulness, embarrassment, uncertainty, self-doubt, regret, and excitement.

## Split Personalities

In addition to drawing an impromptu card, the speaker must choose a “personality” to adopt while answering. A facilitator can create the personality cards ahead of time or have players jot down character types on small slips of paper to be thrown into a hat. Some ideas include: impassioned preacher, carnival barker, valley girl, drill sergeant, game show host, Zen master, mad scientist, drug dealer, bohemian poet, town gossip, preschool teacher, absent-minded professor, aerobics instructor, rapper, or stand-up comedian.

## Worst Nightmare

To learn to keep their focus under difficult conditions, players practice speaking to a deliberately unreceptive, bored, and distracted audience. For one raucous round, encourage other players to interrupt the speaker with off-topic questions, carry on side-conversations, write text messages, come and go from the room, take calls, and/or send confusing, nonverbal signals.

## Devil’s Advocate

To learn to keep composure under fire, players practice speaking to an argumentative, contentious, and overly critical audience. As the speaker answers the prompt, encourage the other players to push back, poke holes in the speaker’s arguments, and challenge his or her ideas. This variation works especially well with the purple Justifications deck.

To purchase a boxed set of 360 SoundBite cards, visit [www.speechskills.com/soundbites](http://www.speechskills.com/soundbites)



## Brainstorm

Speaking in  
complete sentences ...

Name three people who  
have made a difference  
in your life, and why.

## Brainstorm

Speaking in  
complete sentences ...

Name three modern  
inventions you don't want  
to live without, and why.

*"Tell me about  
yourself ..."*

## Personal File

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## Brainstorm

Speaking in  
complete sentences ...

Name three chores  
you hate, and why.

## Brainstorm

Speaking in  
complete sentences ...

Name three fictional  
characters who you'd like  
to meet, and why.

## Brainstorm

Speaking in  
complete sentences ...

Name three occupations  
you would find  
fascinating, and why.

## Memories

Share a personal story about ...

One of the best gifts you've ever received

## Memories

Share a personal story about ...

A memorable plane, train, or bus ride

*"Tell me about yourself ..."*

## Personal File

SPEECH **SKILLS**   
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## Memories

Share a personal story about ...

A time you surprised someone

## Memories

Share a personal story about ...

One of your first trips away from home

## Memories

Share a personal story about ...

A moment you'd love to relive

## What if?

Describe how your life might change if ...



You could read a book just by holding it

## What if?

Describe how your life might change if ...



You won the Nobel Prize

*"Tell me about yourself ..."*

## Personal File

SPEECH **SKILLS**   
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## What if?

Describe how your life might change if ...



You could be in two places at once

## What if?

Describe how your life might change if ...



You could be fluent in any language of your choice

## What if?

Describe how your life might change if ...



You could be your boss's boss for a day

## Instructions Not Included

Give easy-to-follow  
directions on how to . . .

Build a snowman

## Instructions Not Included

Give easy-to-follow  
directions on how to . . .

Make a cup of tea

*“Give it to me plain  
and simple . . .”*

## Straight Talk

SPEECH **SKILLS** >>  
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## Instructions Not Included

Give easy-to-follow  
directions on how to . . .

Roll up a sleeping bag

## Instructions Not Included

Give easy-to-follow  
directions on how to . . .

Play tic-tac-toe

## Instructions Not Included

Give easy-to-follow  
directions on how to . . .

Set an alarm clock

## In Other Words

Paraphrase the following words of wisdom . . .



Those who sleep with dogs will rise with fleas.

## In Other Words

Paraphrase the following words of wisdom . . .



Necessity is the mother of invention.

*“Give it to me plain and simple . . .”*

## Straight Talk

SPEECH **SKILLS**   
SOUNDBITES

## In Other Words

Paraphrase the following words of wisdom . . .

A chain is no stronger than its weakest link.

## In Other Words

Paraphrase the following words of wisdom . . .



You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

## In Other Words

Paraphrase the following words of wisdom . . .



The pen is mightier than the sword.



## Smarter Than a First-Grader

Explain in terms that a  
six-year-old would understand . . .

Why we can't have  
wolves as pets

## Smarter Than a First-Grader

Explain in terms that a  
six-year-old would understand . . .

Why we see the stars  
only at night

*"Give it to me plain  
and simple..."*

## Straight Talk

SPEECH **SKILLS** >>  
SOUNDBITES

## Smarter Than a First-Grader

Explain in terms that a  
six-year-old would understand . . .

Why your mouth  
waters when you smell  
yummy food

## Smarter Than a First-Grader

Explain in terms that a  
six-year-old would understand . . .

Why children look  
like their parents

## Smarter Than a First-Grader

Explain in terms that a  
six-year-old would understand . . .

Why we pay taxes

## Square Peg, Round Hole

Give a compelling  
argument that ...

Lint is:

- 1) mischievous
- 2) coy
- 3) bold
- 4) beautiful
- 5) strong willed
- 6) mistaken

Roll die to choose a response from the list.

## Square Peg, Round Hole

Give a compelling  
argument that ...

Mismatched socks are:

- 1) primal
- 2) stealthy
- 3) contemplative
- 4) restless
- 5) tangy
- 6) mature

Roll die to choose a response from the list.

*“Kindly connect  
the dots...”*

## Justifications

SPEECH **SKILLS**   
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## Square Peg, Round Hole

Give a compelling  
argument that ...

A sunrise is:

- 1) hostile
- 2) confusing
- 3) polite
- 4) hardworking
- 5) ridiculous
- 6) expensive

Roll die to choose a response from the list.

## Square Peg, Round Hole

Give a compelling  
argument that ...

The Statue of Liberty is:

- 1) genuine
- 2) ditzzy
- 3) delicious
- 4) secretive
- 5) efficient
- 6) stern

Roll die to choose a response from the list.

## Square Peg, Round Hole

Give a compelling  
argument that ...

Pro-wrestling is:

- 1) simple
- 2) creepy
- 3) intellectual
- 4) sticky
- 5) hilarious
- 6) mysterious

Roll die to choose a response from the list.

## Fictionary

Provide a convincing definition for the following gibberish word ...



- 1) Vestabular
- 2) Drefty
- 3) Axucate
- 4) Opulator
- 5) Feshful
- 6) Panadrill

Roll a die to choose a word from the list.

## Fictionary

Provide a convincing definition for the following gibberish word ...



- 1) Bengustar
- 2) Querret
- 3) Thage
- 4) Endepulate
- 5) Dreendle
- 6) Smuftish

Roll a die to choose a word from the list.

*“Kindly connect the dots...”*

## Justifications

SPEECH **SKILLS**   
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## Fictionary

Provide a convincing definition for the following gibberish word ...



- 1) Unbazzle
- 2) Pluckant
- 3) Olibert
- 4) Therian
- 5) Serebrian
- 6) Aclastic

Roll a die to choose a word from the list.

## Fictionary

Provide a convincing definition for the following gibberish word ...



- 1) Spotacious
- 2) Pestorp
- 3) Exviation
- 4) Dabnick
- 5) Steffish
- 6) Gludal

Roll a die to choose a word from the list.

## Fictionary

Provide a convincing definition for the following gibberish word ...



- 1) Glafick
- 2) Vonting
- 3) Strickish
- 4) Charnium
- 5) Mangular
- 6) Tacaltate

Roll a die to choose a word from the list.

## Salesman of the Year

Offer a compelling argument to sell . . .

A fishing rod to:

- 1) a nun
- 2) an archeologist
- 3) a Mafia boss
- 4) a glassblower
- 5) a safecracker
- 6) a janitor

Roll a die to choose your customer.

## Salesman of the Year

Offer a compelling argument to sell . . .

A library card to:

- 1) a baby
- 2) a magician
- 3) a zookeeper
- 4) a janitor
- 5) a video game designer
- 6) a welder

Roll a die to choose your customer.

*“Kindly connect the dots...”*

## Justifications

SPEECH **SKILLS**   
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## Salesman of the Year

Offer a compelling argument to sell . . .

A pair of tap shoes to:

- 1) a candy shop owner
- 2) a librarian
- 3) a little league soccer coach
- 4) a surgeon
- 5) a yoga teacher
- 6) a mail carrier

Roll a die to choose your customer.

## Salesman of the Year

Offer a compelling argument to sell . . .

A ladder to:

- 1) a backpacker
- 2) a slam poet
- 3) a priest
- 4) a concert pianist
- 5) an airport security guard
- 6) a bug collector

Roll a die to choose your customer.

## Salesman of the Year

Offer a compelling argument to sell . . .

A grand piano to:

- 1) a professional wrestler
- 2) a crossing guard
- 3) a police sketch artist
- 4) a lion tamer
- 5) a doctor
- 6) an NBA player

Roll a die to choose your customer.

## Difficult Feedback

Please offer tactful feedback for the following situation . . .

>> Your boss, who continually pronounces the word *fiscal* as “fisical,” asks for your parting advice before her presentation to the board.

## Difficult Feedback

Please offer tactful feedback for the following situation . . .

>> An attractive person sits near you at a café and strikes up a conversation. About 10 minutes into a really nice talk, you realize that he/she thinks you’re his/her blind date.

“How shall I put this . . .?”

## Grace under Pressure

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## Difficult Feedback

Please offer tactful feedback for the following situation . . .

>> Even though she knows you are a vegetarian, your mother continues to sneak meat into your meals because, “It’s better for you.”

## Difficult Feedback

Please offer tactful feedback for the following situation . . .

>> Your coworker in the next cubicle frequently interjects “humorous” comments into your phone conversations. He thinks he’s building camaraderie, but you’re feeling the opposite.

## Difficult Feedback

Please offer tactful feedback for the following situation . . .

>> On a whim, your friend gets a tattoo of Japanese kanji characters that she believes say “Peace.” She wants to know what you think of it. You are fluent in Japanese and know it actually says something vulgar.

## Moment in the Spotlight

Please stand and deliver . . .

A motivational speech to your fleet of eleven-year-old paper carriers

## Moment in the Spotlight

Please stand and deliver . . .

A halftime pep talk to your high school football team when you're down by 20 points

*"How shall I put this . . .?"*

## Grace under Pressure

SPEECH **SKILLS**   
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## Moment in the Spotlight

Please stand and deliver . . .

An inspirational speech to baby birds on the eve of their first flight

## Moment in the Spotlight

Please stand and deliver . . .

The best-man speech for your best friend's third wedding

## Moment in the Spotlight

Please stand and deliver . . .

A speech on the occasion of your own retirement

## Smooth Talker

Use your powers of persuasion to convince someone in the room to . . .

Babysit your kids and/or pets while you go on vacation

## Smooth Talker

Use your powers of persuasion to convince someone in the room to . . .

Contribute something homemade to your charity bake sale

*“How shall I put this . . .?”*

## Grace under Pressure

SPEECH **SKILLS**   
SOUNDBITES

## Smooth Talker

Use your powers of persuasion to convince someone in the room to . . .

Give up his or her phone for the day

## Smooth Talker

Use your powers of persuasion to convince someone in the room to . . .

Provide you with a wake-up call each morning next week

## Smooth Talker

Use your powers of persuasion to convince someone in the room to . . .

Swap offices (or desks) with you