TOPIC MAINTENANCE

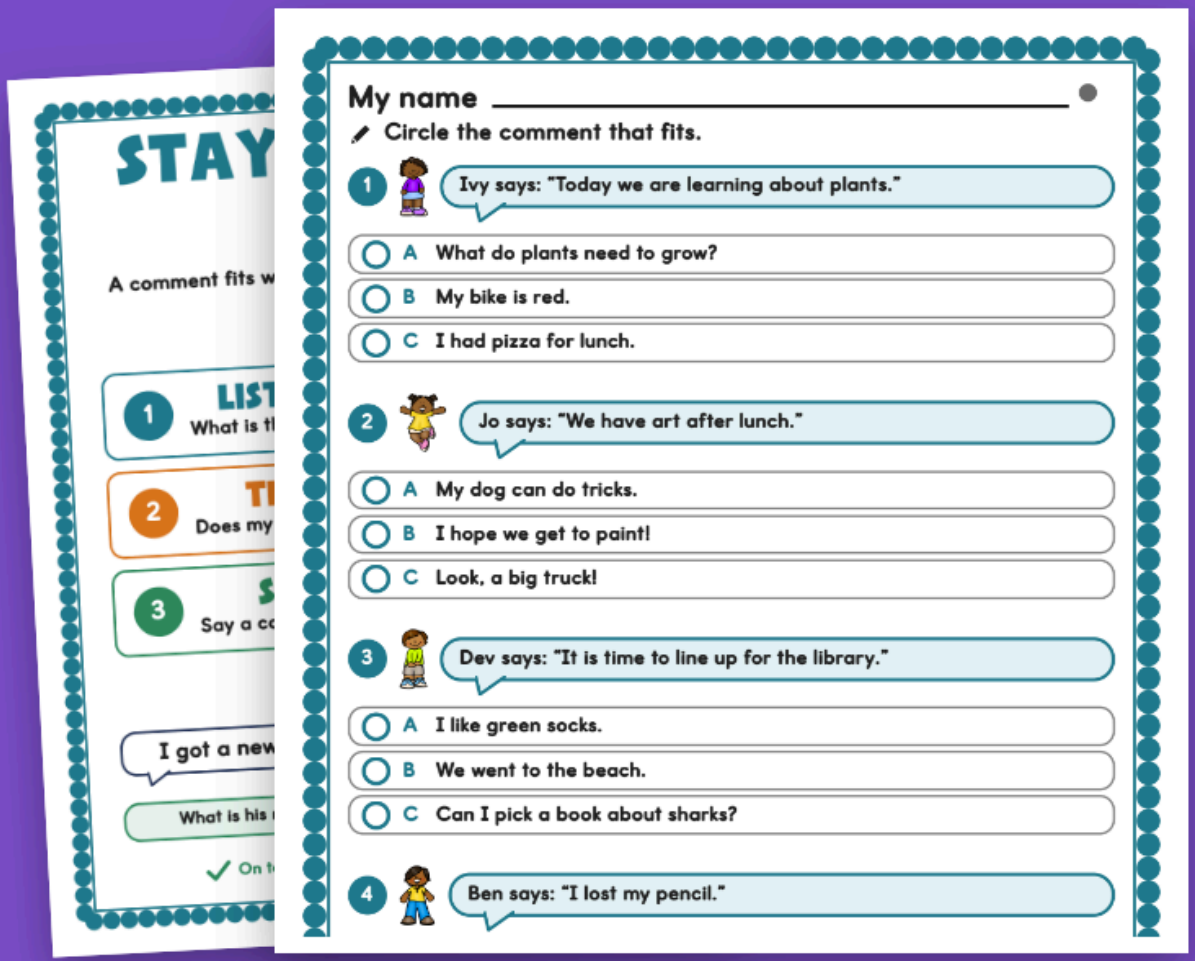
Grades 2-6

On-Topic Comments, Cards, Tally



16 STUDENT PAGES

FILLABLE PDF



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- Open it in a PDF reader (Adobe Acrobat Reader, Preview, or your browser), click into a line or a box, type, and Save As.
- The name lines, fix-it sheets, tallies, graph, roll-up, goal page, family page and hand-off page are type-in fields. You can also print any page and write by hand.
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Print at 100 percent

Turn off fit to page and shrink to fit so the sort cards keep their size. Every page is readable in black and white. Print the posters on cardstock if you want them to last; everything else is fine on copy paper.

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PREVIEW

How to Use It: Five Short Routines

Each one takes a few minutes. Pick the ones that fit your day.

1. Teach the three steps

- Show the poster (page 5). Read the steps together: listen, think, say.
- Say a topic out loud. Children give one comment that fits, then one that does not, and say which is which.

2. Circle the one that fits

- Start with the circle-level sheets (pages 7 and 8). The off-topic comments are about something else.
- Move to the square level (pages 9 and 10), then the triangle level (pages 11 and 12), where an off-topic comment starts on the topic and then changes it.
- Check with the answer key (page 21).

3. Sort and fix

- Hand out the sort mat (page 13) and a set of cards (page 14 or 15), pre-trimmed if your group needs that. Children sort on topic and off topic.
- Use the fix-it sheets (pages 17 and 18) for children who can say why a comment is off and write one that fits.

4. Count a real conversation

- Pick a topic, then talk with the child for 5 turns. After each turn, mark + (fits the topic) or - (does not) on the tally (page 22).
- Color the graph (page 24) and fill the weekly roll-up (page 25). See the filled example (page 26).

5. Reflect and send home

- The child colors rings on My Topic Check (page 20).
- Send the family page (page 28) home with a topic to try at dinner.

Notes on your day

PREVIEW

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TOPIC HELPERS

Words that keep my comment on the topic.

Tell me more about _____.

I have a question about _____.

Me too! I _____.

What happened next?

I like _____, too.

Why did _____ happen?

WANT A NEW TOPIC?

Ask first: "Can we talk about _____ next?"

PREVIEW

My name _____

Circle the comment that fits.

1 

Ivy says: "Today we are learning about plants."

- A What do plants need to grow?
- B My bike is red.
- C I had pizza for lunch.

2 

Jo says: "We have art after lunch."

- A My dog can do tricks.
- B I hope we get to paint!
- C Look, a big truck!

3 

Dev says: "It is time to line up for the library."

- A I like green socks.
- B We went to the beach.
- C Can I pick a book about sharks?

4 

Ben says: "I lost my pencil."

- A You can borrow mine.
- B Pizza is my favorite.
- C My uncle has a boat.

PREVIEW

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My name _____

Circle the comment that fits.

9 

Ana says: "I am going to play tag."

- A I have a spelling test.
- B Did you see the new movie?
- C Can I play, too?

10 

Leo says: "The swings are all taken."

- A We can ask to take turns.
- B My tablet has a new game.
- C I like chicken.

11 

Tia says: "I found a cool rock."

- A My lunch has apples.
- B Can I see it?
- C We go to the pool on Friday.

12 

Max says: "Let's play soccer."

- A My hat is at home.
- B Do you like drums?
- C Okay, which team am I on?

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Shed

My name _____

Circle the comment that fits.

17 

Zoe says: "I went to the lake on Saturday."

- A Cool lake. My game has new levels.
- B Did you swim in the lake?
- C A lake! I need new shoes, though.

18 

Eli says: "We saw a movie about a dragon."

- A A dragon! What is for dinner?
- B Movies are fun. I lost my coat.
- C Was the dragon friendly?

19 

Rosa says: "My cousin is visiting this weekend."

- A What will you two do?
- B A cousin! I like to bake.
- C Visiting? My pencil is broken.

20 

Sam says: "I am learning to ride a bike."

- A A bike! Do we have homework?
- B Do you have training wheels?
- C Bikes are fast. My lunch is cold.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Shed

Cut the cards. Sort them.

The topic is: Our class hamster, Biscuit

What does Biscuit eat?	I got new sneakers.	What time is lunch?
Biscuit runs on his wheel at night.	Can I help clean his cage?	My grandpa has a boat.
I like the color purple.	Biscuit is the softest one.	Who takes Biscuit home on Friday?
Do you have a pencil?	It is my sister's birthday.	Biscuit is hiding in his house.

PREVIEW

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Cut the cards. Write your own comments.

The topic is _____

PREVIEW

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My name _____

Fix the off-topic comment.

4 

Eli says: "I got a new puppy."

✗ Math is hard.

✓ Write a comment that fits.

_____

_____

5 

Tom says: "We are going to the park."

✗ My crayons are broken.

✓ Write a comment that fits.

_____

_____

6 

Nia says: "I am making a card for Grandma."

✗ I want a snack.

✓ Write a comment that fits.

_____

_____

PREVIEW

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My name _____

✎ **Color a ring for each turn I stayed on topic.**

Turns 1 to 5 | The topic was

1 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ _____

2 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ _____

3 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ _____

4 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ _____

5 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ _____

6 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ _____

7 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ _____

8 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ _____

Next time I will

_____

PREVIEW

5-Turn Tally: A Small Group

One topic, one conversation. Mark each child's 5 turns: + fits the topic, - does not.

Group _____ Date _____ Topic _____

Child	Turn 1	Turn 2	Turn 3	Turn 4	Turn 5	On topic

PREVIEW

The topic everyone stayed on best

_____

_____

Who needs a model next time

_____

_____

Weekly Roll-Up

Add the week from the tally. Turns counted = conversations x 5. Percent = on-topic turns divided by turns counted, times 100.

Child _____ Setting _____ Topics we used _____

Week of	Conversations	Turns counted	On-topic turns	Percent	Note

PREVIEW

For the team: what the numbers say in plain words

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sample Goal Lines, With Blanks

Starting wording for your team to change. The setting, the criteria, the partner and the way you decide a goal is met are yours to fill in.

Sample line 1: counting turns in a conversation

In [setting], [student] will make a comment that stays on the topic for [criteria] of 5 turns in a conversation with [partner], as shown on the tally (page 22).

[setting] I will write _____ [criteria] I will write _____ [partner] I will write _____

Sample line 2: choosing or writing a comment that fits

In [setting], [student] will choose or write a comment that fits the topic on [criteria] of the 24 scenario cards (pages 7 to 12), as shown on the answer key.

[setting] I will write _____ [criteria] I will write _____ [student] I will write _____

Our team's own goal, in our own words

_____

_____

_____

_____

How we will decide it is met (your district's rule)

_____

_____

What this page is not

Sample wording only. It does not say what a child should be able to do at any age, who qualifies, or how often to practice. Those decisions belong to your team and your district.

PREVIEW

A Note for Home

Send this home so the practice goes where talking happens.

Date _____ Child _____

What we are practicing

Staying on topic means a comment goes with what the other person just said. At school we listen for the topic, think about whether a comment fits, and then say it.

Try it at home (5 minutes)

- Pick a topic together: a pet, a trip, a game or dinner.
- Take 5 turns. Each person says one comment about that topic.
- If a comment wanders, say: "That is a new topic. Say one more about ____."
- If your child wants to change topics, they can ask: "Can we talk about ____ next?"

A topic to try this week

_____

A comment that fit

_____

_____

Note from the teacher

A note back to school

PREVIEW

Phrase Bank

Words for before, during and after a conversation. Fill each blank with what you really saw.

Name the topic

- "We are talking about ____."
- "What is the topic right now?"
- "Say the topic in three words."
- "Listen for the topic first."

Check the comment

- "Does that fit the topic?"
- "Is that about ____ or about something else?"
- "Try it again so it fits."
- "Which comment goes with what ____ said?"

Bring it back, kindly

- "Let's get back to ____."
- "Hold that idea for later. What about ____?"
- "That is a new topic. Say one more about ____."
- "I heard ____. Can you add on to it?"

Praise what you saw

- "I saw you stay on ____ for ____ turns."
- "Your comment matched what ____ said."
- "You asked a question about ____. That kept us on topic."
- "You fixed your comment all by yourself."

Written starters (tally and notes)

- Today ____ stayed on topic for ____ of ____ turns.
- The topic was ____ and the setting was ____.
- Next I will ____.
- A comment that helped: ____.

PREVIEW