

GOOD TIDINGS · CLASSROOM GUIDE

"Interrupt"

A Lesson Plan Guide for Elementary Teachers

*"When Tera was there, she did the talking,
Conversations felt like walking—
Through noisy woods with no clear track,
Just chatter bouncing back to back."*

FROM THE BOOK *GOOD TIDINGS* BY KIKIPD

GOOD TIDINGS

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Turning "Interrupt" Into a Listening Lesson

"Interrupt" tells the story of Tera, a girl who talks over everyone around her — and misses out on something important because of it. It's a gentle, funny way into a big classroom topic: active listening, patience, and why waiting your turn actually matters. This guide gives you four ready-to-teach lesson options built around the poem, plus two printable worksheets, so you can pick what fits your grade level and time.

Interrupt — an excerpt

Tera liked talking out of turn—
Cut right in between your words.
She never listened to what was said,
Paid more attention to thoughts in her head.

She'd interrupt with a quick remark,
Or blurt out loud and miss the mark.
She gave opinions no one sought,
Without a pause or second thought.

READ THE FULL STORY

Tera's classroom lesson — and how the poem wraps up — continues in full in Good Tidings by Kikipd. The lessons in this guide work great alongside a class read-aloud of the complete poem. Find the book at goodtidingsbooks.com.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Four Lessons, One Poem

Each option below stands on its own, so pick the one (or two) that fit your grade level, subject block, and time. Every lesson circles back to the same poem, so students build a deeper connection to it the more you use this guide.

- 1

Listening Ears — Grades K–2, SEL, 25–30 min
A read-aloud and movement activity introducing whole-body active listening.
- 2

Rhyme, Rhythm & Imagery — Grades 3–5, ELA, 35–40 min
Poetry analysis focused on rhyme scheme and the poem's central metaphor.
- 3

The Conversation Ball — Grades K–5, Speaking & Listening, 20–25 min
A hands-on turn-taking practice you can reuse all year long.
- 4

Dear Tera — Grades 2–5, Writing / Character Ed, 30–35 min
A reflective writing lesson connecting the poem to students' own habits.

TWO PRINTABLE WORKSHEETS INCLUDED
A K–2 "Listening Check-In" and a 3–5 "Interrupt Poem Study" are ready to print at the back of this guide — no extra prep needed.

LESSON OPTION 1

Listening Ears

Grades K–2

SEL

25–30 min

OBJECTIVE	STANDARDS ALIGNMENT
Students identify what active listening looks and sounds like, and practice it through a whole-body listening game tied to the poem.	CASEL — Relationship Skills & Self-Management CCSS.SLK.1–2.1 (comprehension & collaboration)
MATERIALS	VOCABULARY
• "Interrupt" poem (page 2 of this guide) • Chart paper or whiteboard • Optional: paper headbands for a "listening ears" craft	• Interrupt • Active listener • Take turns

HOW TO TEACH IT

1. **Read the first three stanzas aloud.** Stop after "just chatter bouncing back to back" and ask: "What do you notice about how Tera talks to people?"
2. **Build an anchor chart together** titled "Whole-Body Listening": quiet mouth, eyes on the speaker, still body, listening ears, thinking brain.
3. **Play "Secret Message Relay."** Line students up and whisper a short message ("We're going outside") to the first student, passing it down the line. Ask: what happens if someone isn't really listening? Connect it to how Tera's class secretly slips away because she missed the message.
4. **Finish the poem aloud** and ask: "What did Tera learn by the end?"
5. **Close with a mini poster.** Students draw themselves using one whole-body listening skill from the anchor chart, and label it.

BRING IT BACK TO THE POEM

"Missed the message in the crowd" is a perfect line to revisit any time a student needs a gentle reminder to listen — it becomes classroom shorthand without singling anyone out.

Extension: Turn the anchor chart into a permanent classroom poster and reference "listening ears" language during transitions all year.

LESSON OPTION 2

Rhyme, Rhythm & Imagery

Grades 3–5

ELA / Poetry

35–40 min

OBJECTIVE	STANDARDS ALIGNMENT
Students identify the poem's rhyme scheme and analyze the extended comparison the poet uses to describe interrupting.	CCSS.RL.3–5.4 (word choice & figurative language) CCSS.RL.3–5.5 (poem structure)
MATERIALS	VOCABULARY
"Interrupt" poem, one copy per student - Highlighters (two colors) - Worksheet: Interrupt Poem Study (page 8 of this guide)	- Rhyme scheme - Metaphor / comparison - Word choice

HOW TO TEACH IT

- First read: just for enjoyment.** Read the poem straight through with no interruptions (fitting, given the topic).
- Second read: hunt for rhymes.** In pairs, students highlight end-of-line rhyming words in one color and label the rhyme scheme stanza by stanza (most stanzas follow an AABB pattern).
- Zoom in on stanza three.** Read aloud: "Conversations felt like walking— through noisy woods with no clear track." Ask: What is being compared to what? Why might the poet compare a conversation to noisy woods instead of, say, a smooth road?
- Word choice hunt.** Have students circle strong verbs the poet uses for Tera's talking — *cut in*, *interrupt*, *blurt*, *rambled* — and discuss how those words shape the reader's impression of her.
- Independent work:** students complete the Interrupt Poem Study worksheet.

BRING IT BACK TO THE POEM

Use "noisy woods with no clear track" as a model any time you teach extended metaphor — it's concrete, visual, and easy for students to picture and imitate in their own writing.

Extension: Challenge students to write one original AABB stanza comparing a classroom behavior (good or not-so-good) to something in nature.

LESSON OPTION 3

The Conversation Ball

Grades K–5

Speaking & Listening

20–25 min

OBJECTIVE

Students practice waiting for a turn to speak and contributing to a group conversation without interrupting, using a simple, reusable classroom routine.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

CCSS.SL (grade-level).1 – participate in collaborative conversations with varied partners on grade-level topics

MATERIALS

- One soft ball, beanbag, or small stuffed animal (“the talking piece”)
- Simple discussion topic (see step 3)
- Chairs or carpet circle

VOCABULARY

- Turn-taking
- Contribute
- Wait and wonder

HOW TO TEACH IT

1. **Read the poem** and ask students how it feels to be talked over — reference “just chatter bouncing back to back.”
2. **Introduce the rule:** only the student holding the ball may speak. Everyone else listens with whole-body listening (see Lesson 1 anchor chart, if you’ve taught it).
3. **Pick an easy, low-stakes topic** so the focus stays on the turn-taking skill: favorite season, a weekend plan, or “one thing that made you smile today.”
4. **Pass the ball around the circle.** Each student gets one uninterrupted turn to speak, then passes it on.
5. **Debrief:** “How did that feel different from a regular conversation?” Tie it back to the poem’s final lesson — that listening first means you don’t miss out on things.

BRING IT BACK TO THE POEM

Keep the Conversation Ball in a visible spot and reuse it for morning meeting, book talks, or any discussion where interrupting tends to creep in — it needs no extra setup once students know the routine.

Extension: For older students, add a “build on it” rule — before sharing a new idea, they briefly restate what the last speaker said.

LESSON OPTION 4

Dear Tera

Grades 2–5

Writing / Character Ed

30–35 min

OBJECTIVE	STANDARDS ALIGNMENT
Students reflect on their own listening habits and practice narrative or letter writing by responding personally to the poem.	CCSS.W.2–5.3 (narrative writing) CCSS.SL.2–5.1 (collaborative discussion, for the optional share-out)
MATERIALS	VOCABULARY
• Writing journals or lined paper • "Interrupt" poem • Pencils	• Reflect • Advice • Perspective

HOW TO TEACH IT

1. **Read the full poem aloud**, start to finish, without stopping.
2. **Offer a choice of prompts** (write one on the board, or let students choose):
 - Write about a time you were interrupted, or a time you interrupted someone. How did it feel?
 - Write a friendly letter to Tera giving her advice on how to listen better.
 - Rewrite the poem's last stanza in your own words.
3. **Give quiet writing time** (10–15 minutes), circulating to support students who need help getting started.
4. **Optional partner share:** use the Conversation Ball routine from Lesson 3 so sharing stays orderly and low-pressure.
5. **Close with one commitment:** each student names one thing they'll try this week to be a better listener.

BRING IT BACK TO THE POEM

Writing "to" Tera rather than about a real classmate keeps the reflection safe and low-stakes — students can be honest about the behavior without it feeling like it's aimed at anyone specific.

Extension: Collect the "advice for Tera" letters into a class book of listening tips to revisit later in the year.

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET · GRADES K-2

My Listening Check-In

Name: _____

After reading "Interrupt," check off the whole-body listening skills you practiced today!

☐ I looked at the person talking.☐ I kept my body still and quiet.☐ I waited for my turn to talk.☐ I thought about what the speaker said.☐ I did not interrupt.

Draw a picture of yourself being a great listener:

draw here

One thing I will try this week:

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET · GRADES 3–5

"Interrupt" Poem Study

Name: _____

1. Find the rhymes. Write one rhyming word pair from each stanza below.

Stanza	Rhyming Word Pair
1	
2	
3	
4	

2. In stanza three, the poet compares a conversation with Tera to "walking through noisy woods with no clear track." What picture does that create in your mind? Why is it a good comparison for interrupting?

3. Rewrite the final stanza of the poem in your own words.