

“How to Talk to Girls” Alec Greven
NewsDepth, December 11, 2008
Classroom Activities



<http://www.russiatoday.com/features/news/34279>

Overview:

Comb your hair and don't wear sweats.
Control your hyperness (cut down on the sugar if you have to).
Don't act desperate.

These are just three tips offered by Alec Greven, a nine year old fourth grader from Castle Rock, Colorado. You'll find these tips among many others in his book, How to Talk to Girls. The book is geared for boys of all ages – from eight to eighty- and the girls they like. Alec loves to read and write and has appeared on the Ellen DeGeneres Show and on CNN. He has authored another book, How to Talk to Moms, and his third book, How to Talk to Dads, is due for release in the spring of 2009. Today's activities will challenge students to identify difficulties they may have communicating with peers, family members, and adults. They will be encouraged to work on developing their communication and conversation skills.

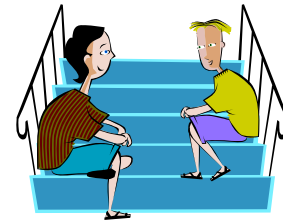
Grade Level: 4

Subject: Language Arts

Standards Addressed:

Students will generate writing through discussion with others and from printed materials.

Students will learn to communicate effectively through exposure to good models and opportunities for practice.



Classroom Activities

1. Activity #1 How to Talk to

- Alec Graven is a boy your age. He has already written two books and is working on his third book. The subject material of his books center on how to talk to people. The first book is titled How to Talk to Girls. His second book is about how to talk to moms, and his third book is about how to talk to dads.
- Have you ever wanted to write a book? What would you choose to write about? How long do you think it would take to write a book?

- Visit <http://www.amazon.com/How-Talk-Girls-Alec-Greven/dp/0061709999> and listen to his interview about the book. Provided at the end of this lesson is a transcript of this interview. Handout #3
 - Why does he say he wrote the book?
 - His book was written as part of a class creative writing assignment. He observed boys and girls in his class on the playground, in the classroom, before and after school, and in the lunchroom. His observations were then applied to his book.
 - Do you think his observations and tips were accurate? Do you agree with his advice? Boys, do you? Girls, do you?
 - Handout #1 is a list of some of his tips. Cut out the tips and have students in the class take turns drawing one of the tips. Then ask the student to comment on the tip. Agree or disagree? If you disagree, why do you? How would you alter the advice given? If a girl is responding to a tip, how might she change it to apply to girls talking to boys?

2. Activity #2 How to Talk toWell, anyone

- Alec Graven's book was written as advice to boys because he said he saw a lot of boys having trouble talking to girls. His tips were offered to help boys overcome their shyness.
- Fourth graders are at an age when conversations with "anyone" can pose a challenge. Nine and ten year olds can find it difficult to go beyond "hi" with not only their peers, but with their teachers, their parents and grandparents, and other adults. Some students can be in home situations that don't nurture "kidspeak." They might not be encouraged to enter into conversations and their opinions are never listened to or respected. That can most certainly carry over into their classroom and social situations.
- Assign your students to small groups of 3 or 4. (This will make it easier for everyone to get a chance to talk)
 1. Who do you find it the easiest to talk to? (A friend, a particular girl or boy, a parent, a teacher?)
 - What makes this person easy to talk to? Does listening have anything to do with why they are easy to talk to?
 2. Who do you find it difficult to talk to?
 - What makes this person a challenge to talk to? What advice might you give each other about how to better talk to this person?
- Bring the class back together. Explain that with the holidays coming up there are going to be many opportunities for students to engage in conversations with others. At the family Christmas gathering there will be aunts and uncles and grandparents present who may find it equally challenging to enter into conversations with the younger children present.
- Offer these simple tips: **How to talk to.....Well, anyone:** Handout #2



- As an opportunity to involve parents or family partners in this lesson, make copies of the handout and have students take them home. Ask students to go over the handout with those at home. Parents can be encouraged to become more involved with improving communication and social skills with their children.

3. Activity #3 Alec's Original Creative Writing Assignment

- Alec's book was the result of a creative writing classroom assignment he was given in the third grade. The assignment was for the students to be "observers of the world," focusing in on small moments and then writing about them.
- For half a week, he quietly watched his classmates interact at recess and drew some insightful conclusions about their behavior. A week later, he submitted his report to his teacher. He called it *How to Talk to Girls*.
- Make the same assignment to your students. Ask them to be "Observers of the world." Give them one week to choose something to observe very closely. They are to pay close attention to details, to "small moments" and then they are to write a 1 page paper drawing at least 2 conclusions about what they have observed. They may illustrate their paper. If they choose, they can invite someone else to provide an illustration for their work. (Alec was given an illustrator after he got a publisher for his book).

4. Activity #4 Life is Hard, Move On

- In one of his interviews, Alec Greven says, "The most important tip in the whole book is 'Life is Hard, move on,' because it doesn't just apply to girls. It applies to the whole world, because if your brother steals your toys - life is hard, move on. You can even steal them back."
<http://www.amazon.com/How-Talk-Girls-Alec-Greven/dp/0061709999>
- Write a paragraph, starting with the quote "Life is Hard, move on." In your paragraph, describe a difficult time you have had and you just had to move on.

Additional resources:

http://news.google.com/news?q=How+to+Talk+to+Girls&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-SearchBox&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&sourceid=ie7&rlz=117ATSA&um=1&hl=en&ncl=1277028072&sa=X&oi=news_result&esnum=2&ct=more-results&cd=1 List of several articles about Alec's Book

http://familyfun.go.com/parenting/child/skills/feature/famf010401_famf116talk1/
Teaching children the art of good conversation.

<http://homeschoolenrichment.com/community/pub9990289167619.cgi?itemid=9990289250628&action=viewad&categoryid=9990289167619&page=1&placeonpage=4&totaldisplayed=50> Preparing children for the art of good conversation

How to Talk to Girls Conversation Prompts Handout #1

If you are talkative, don't go for a shy girl.

If you are shy, go for a talkative girl. Then you only have to say one sentence and she will do the rest of the talking.

Pretty girls are like cars that need a lot of oil and all they do is pretty much worry about how they look and they don't care about anything else.

The rule with gifts is, really don't give her gifts unless it's a like a special occasion, like a school dance or something.

Crushes are kinda like a good thing and a bad thing. They kinda go up and down like the stock market. The main thing is you have to control your hyperness.

The first word you want to say in a conversation is, "Hi." If she says hi back, then you are off to a good start. If she doesn't say hi back, then you are kinda in trouble.

Don't be a show off. Very few class clowns get girls to like them. Class clowns never make a living.

If you like a girl, comb your hair and don't wear sweats.

Girls win most of the arguments and have most of the power. If you know that now, things might be easier.

Control your hyperness (cut down on sugar if you need to).

Don't give too many compliments or you will look desperate.

Sometimes it takes years to get a girl to like you.

Dating is for "kind of old" people and should not be attempted until the age of 15 or 16.

Life is hard, move on.

Six Communication Skills Every Child Should Know **-modified from Emily Post's Etiquette book**

- 1. Make eye contact.** It is important that children be taught to establish eye contact with the person with whom they are speaking. Looking directly at the other person in the conversation shows interest and gives respect. If you look away or look down, it is a sign that you may not be interested in what the other person is saying.
- 2. Speak up and speak clearly.** Speak loudly enough so that the other person can hear what you are saying. Don't talk too fast and use proper grammar.
- 3. Take turns and don't interrupt.** Don't jump into a conversation just because you feel like talking. Wait until the other person pauses and sounds like they are finished with their sentence.
- 4. Pay attention and respond appropriately.** Be a good listener. Listening is just as important as talking. After someone has said something, respond to their comments as though you heard what they just said. Make your comments and then give others a chance to talk.
- 5. Enter conversations politely.** There is a correct way to join a conversation that uses good manners. If someone is talking and you would like to join in the conversation, it is good to wait until you are spoken to before speaking. Smile or nod your head when someone is talking so they know you are listening. Think before you speak.
- 6. End a conversation politely.** Walking away from a conversation with good manners is very important. Leave a conversation by saying something pleasant such as, "It was nice talking to you," or, "It was nice meeting you." Again, look at the person before you walk away.

Alec's Interview "How to Talk to Girls" Handout#3

Alec: "I wanted to write this book because boys have a lot of trouble with crushes, and I wanted to help the boys with crushes, but I also wanted to write the book because there's a girl for every boy."

Tip #1 Facts of Life

If you fall in love with a girl and she ditches you just have to get over it and try to move on

Tip #2 Crushes

Crushes are kinda like a good thing and a bad thing. They kinda go up and down like the stock market. The main thing is you have to control your hyperness. Cut down on your sugar if you have to because unless a girl is hyper and that is pretty rare, you won't get a good start.

Tip #3 There's a Girl for Every Boy

Pretty girls are like cars that need a lot of oil and all they do is pretty much worry about how they look and they don't care about anything else. Regular girls don't care about how they look. They care about other things, but they're still pretty. So that's why the best choice is a regular girl.

Tip #4 How to Get a Girls' Attention

When you want to get a girl's attention you don't want to be flopping your arms like a crazy mad man. You kinda wanna stick out a little, but don't stick out too much. If you are talkative, don't go for a shy girl. You wanna go usually for a regular girl because what could happen is you could just keep saying words, and the girl could say, "This boy's really weird"

Tip # 5 What to say to girls

The first word you want to say in a conversation is, "Hi." If she says hi back, then you are off to a good start. If she doesn't say hi back, then you are kinda in trouble, so you wanna say, "What did you do over the summer. Did you see an episode of _____(blank)?"

Tip #6 Gifts, Flowers and other Things

The rule with gifts is, really don't give her gifts unless it's a like special occasion, like a school dance or something. If you went into elementary school, and you're like, "Here I got these for you," it's too suspicious. They're gonna be like, "That boy likes it. You like her"...and then the girl will ditch you.

If you keep going on that, you'll have success, and you'll have her till Middle School and quite possibly High School, and that's when you'll start taking to dates and everything and you can maybe even get married.

The most important tip in the whole book is "Life is Hard, move on, because it doesn't just apply to girls. It applies to the whole world, because if your brother steals your toys - life is hard, move on. You can even steal them back."

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