



# **THE CLEAN SPEECH PROJECT**

promoting constructive speech

***Y5 Syllabus***



a joint project of

Seed **GIFT**

# Lesson 1: Lashon Hara -The 3 people affected

## Lesson Objectives:

- To understand that three people are negatively affected when speaking Lashon Hara -The Speaker, The Listener and The Subject.
- To appreciate that when trust is broken – it is hard to repair.
- To know that as a speaker of Lashon Hara – people will be wary of having you as a friend, knowing that you talk about others behind their back.
- To realise that the damage of Lashon Hara is hard to put right.

## Lesson Materials:

- 3-way relationship chart
- Feather Pillow

## Lesson Overview:

**Stage 1:** Quick recap of Non-Kosher Speech.

**Stage 2:** 3-way Relationship Chart.

**Stage 3:** Trust Fall activity.

**Stage 4:** 'The Speaker' Discussion.

**Stage 5:** Feather Pillow Analogy/Story.

## Assessment Method:

- Students will show their understanding of the damage of Lashon Hara with their answers to the 3-way relationship chart.
- Questions, answers and discussions will test students' understanding of the subject matter.

## Differentiation:

- On the 3-way chart, students will give different answers based on their level.
- Trust Fall activity will engage kinaesthetic learners.
- More nuanced examples could be given for higher/lower abilities.

## STAGE 1



### Quick recap of Non-Kosher Speech:

The 3 major categories of Non-Kosher speech are:

- **Motsi Shem Ra** (Lit. Making a Bad Name)  
This refers to spreading lies about other people.
- **Lashon Hara** (Lit. Evil Speech)  
It refers to any statement, which is true, that is nasty or harmful to others.
- **Rechilut** (Lit. Gossip)  
Words that break down relationships. Rechilut speech is not objectively negative, but it will negatively affect relationships between people.

## STAGE 2



### 3-way Relationship Chart:

The Talmud (Arachin 15b) says that Lashon-Hara destroys the relationships between three people.

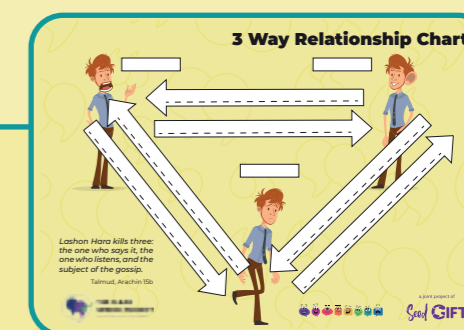
The Speaker, the Listener and the Subject of the Lashon Hara.

Print out the chart for each student. In their own words, write down how Lashon Hara destroys the three-way relationship. Six statements should be written.

Speaker to Listener, Listener to Speaker, Subject to Listener, Listener to Subject, Speaker to Subject, Subject to Speaker.

Discuss in class the students' answers.

Example sheet filled in...



### STAGE 3



Warning: This activity must be done under supervision to ensure no one gets hurt!

**Step 1:** Instruct the person who will fall to stand with their eyes shut and their hands folded across their chest.

**Step 2:** Position the person who will catch behind the person who will fall.

**Step 3:** Instruct the faller to keep their body straight and stiff and to lean back on their heels, allowing themselves to fall into the arms of the catcher.

**Step 4:** Alternatively, position several people to surround the faller. Catchers stand in a semicircle around the back of the faller to catch them.

Note: As faller and catcher get more comfortable, experiment with increasing the distance between the faller and the catcher/s.

**Discussion:** How did it feel to fall and trust the catcher?

What would happen if the catcher forgot to catch you once. Would you trust them again?

How long would it take you to trust them again to fall into their arms?

**Message:** When Lashon Hara is spoken - there is a break in trust between the 3 parties.

It takes a long time, if ever, to rebuild that trust again.

When someone shares something private with us  
– we need to ‘catch them’ and make sure they do not fall!

### STAGE 4



#### **‘The Speaker’ Discussion:**

**Discussion:** Why do you think someone may choose to speak Lashon-Hara about others?

It may feel great being the centre of attention, however that feeling won’t last long.

Ultimately, if you are known to be the type of person who is eager to speak badly about others, no one will ask for your advice or trust you to keep a secret:

*‘In the same way you spoke badly about someone else, perhaps another time you will speak badly about me behind my back’.*

Speaking gossip is also known as “the low down” and “the dirt”.

When you put others down – it only brings us down.

### STAGE 5



#### **Feather Pillow Analogy/Story:**

Once there was a person who could not stop speaking Lashon Hara. He spoke badly about people and destroyed many lives. He wanted to apologise and was not sure how to do so. He went to the Rabbi to ask advice.

The Rabbi asked him to bring a feather pillow. The man was mystified but he returned a bit later with a fluffy pillow. It was a windy day. The rabbi took the pillow and walked to the window. He ripped it open and the feathers spread everywhere.

He then ordered the man: ‘Bring me back all the feathers!’

‘But that’s impossible!’ said the man

‘Exactly!’ said the Rabbi, ‘Once Lashon Hara has spread, the damage is done – it is almost impossible to reverse the damage.’

If possible - buy a feather pillow and act out this story! Get the students to try to retrieve all the feathers.

# Lesson 2:

## Lashon Hara -The Listener

### Lesson Objectives:

- To understand that listening to Lashon Hara is also prohibited.
- For students to realise that like Chinese whispers – messages can become corrupt and we should therefore not believe everything we hear about others.

### Lesson Materials:

- 'Four Misinterpretations' worksheet
- Video clip: It's good to talk (from 1.39 until 3.33)

### Lesson Overview:

**Stage 1:** Recap the 3-way relationship chart.

**Stage 2:** An Innocent Bystander Discussion.

**Stage 3:** Chinese Whispers Game – Four Misinterpretations.

**Stage 4:** Benefit of the Doubt Game.

**Stage 5:** Allowed to be cautious.

**Stage 6:** Get me out of here!

**Stage 7:** Conclusion and Summary.

### Assessment Method:

- Assessment based on worksheet being filled in properly.
- Q&As and discussions throughout class.
- Student groups will show their understanding via acting.

### Differentiation:

- Students can create their own examples of the 'Four Misinterpretations' with varying levels of understanding.
- Students will be able to show their understanding via discussions, worksheet or acting.
- Chinese Whisper game will illustrate the point kinaesthetically.

### STAGE 1



#### Recap the 3-way relationship chart:

With Lashon Hara, 3 relationships are damaged. Trust between all parties are broken.

The Speaker, the Listener and the Subject are all damaged.

### STAGE 2



#### An Innocent Bystander Discussion:

The Talmud also puts blame on the listener of Lashon Hara. But why? What I did I do? I never said anything!

Analogy to bring out the point: A man walks along a bridge and hears a cry for help. He looks down and sees someone drowning. He keeps on walking and decides not to help – even though he is a good swimmer.

Has he done anything wrong?

Why?

Discuss.

So too with Lashon Hara. You could have stopped it. Being passive is not an excuse.

Lashon Hara is like a virus that can cause hatred between people.

However, it can only spread if the listener believes the story.

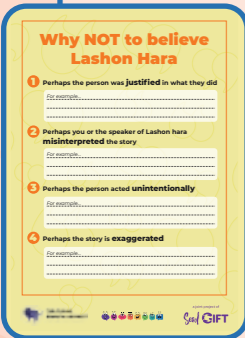


**Chinese Whispers Game – Four Misinterpretations:**

Play a game of Chinese Whispers by getting all the students into one long line. Say a simple word or message and whisper it to the first student in the line. This message gets whispered along the line. The last student says what he has heard. Is it the same?

Message: We cannot believe everything we hear, especially if it's Lashon Hara.

We are not allowed to listen to Lashon Hara EVEN if I tell myself that I won't believe it.



If someone speaks Lashon Hara before I could stop them, even if we are told the story is true, we should still judge the person favourably.

Here are four reasons why we may have got the information wrong:

(Work through the 'Four Misinterpretations' worksheet with the students. Helping them with examples.)

**1. Perhaps the person was JUSTIFIED in what they did.**

For example:

*'Ivor carried on writing when the teacher told us to put our pens down!'*

Real story: Ivor's wrist was hurting and the teacher gave him extra time to do the works

**2. Perhaps you, or the speaker of Lashon Hara, MISINTERPRETED the story.**

For example:

*'Did you know Anna went to Orit's desk and took her pen!'*

Real story: Orit had borrowed Anna's pen and Anna is taking it back.

OR

For example:

*'Did you know Daniel went into McDonalds and ate a cheese bacon sandwich!'*

Real story: Perhaps Daniel went in just to use the toilets.

**3. Perhaps the story is EXAGGERATED.**

For example:

*'Laurie ate up all the ice-cream, leaving nothing for anyone else!'*

Real story: There was only a tiny bit left that Laurie ate.

**4. Perhaps the person acted UNINTENTIONALLY.**

For example:

*'Ben whacked Matti across the face!'*

Real story: Ben sneezed and tried to bring his hand to his face but by mistake slapped Matti.



**Benefit of the Doubt Game:**

If you are told the following tales by someone, how might the person be:

Justified/Misinterpreted/Story exaggerated/It was unintentional

1. 'Jonathan won't invite anyone to his house!'
2. 'Akiva had a huge packet of crisps and refused to share any of them at all!'
3. 'I saw Bella looking around making sure no one was watching and she picked up a bag from the ground'
4. 'I wouldn't trust Debby – I just saw her speaking Lashon Hara about you!'
5. 'So, I was passing a door and heard shouting between Gabby and Jody. Gabby came out crying. I bet Jody said something nasty to her!'



SCAN OR CLICK

For a funny, true example of a misunderstanding, watch this clip: [It's good to talk](#) (from 1.39 – 3.33)

## STAGE 5



### Allowed to be cautious:

It is important to note that listening to negative speech IS ALLOWED if it serves a constructive purpose. However, you may not believe them 100%, you are allowed only to be cautious to protect yourself.

*For example:*

*'Natalie was caught stealing in school!'*

I am allowed to be careful leaving valuable things around. However, I may not embarrass, or harm, Natalie as this may not be true.

*For example:*

*'Biff told me he would thump you at break'*

I am allowed to stay away from Biff at break. However, I may not embarrass, or harm, Biff as this may not be true.

## STAGE 6



### Get me out of here!:

Since we are not allowed to listen to Lashon Hara. How can we remove ourselves from a situation where lashon hara is being spoken?

Get the students to work in small groups and act out different ways and 'excuses' to get out of listening to Lashon Hara.

Some ideas to help you:

- Tell them straight out that its not nice to speak about others that way.
- Argue that they must have misunderstood what happened and suggest a positive side.
- Change the subject.
- 'Sorry - I need to go to the toilet!'
- If all else fails, stick your fingers in your ears.

## STAGE 7



### Conclusion and Summary:

- Lashon Hara only spreads by people believing it.
- We may not listen to Lashon Hara - even if I do not intend to believe it.
- We need to find a way to leave the room and not listen to it.
- If we do listen to Lashon Hara - we need to realise that we may have misunderstood the truth.

# Lesson 3: Lashon Hara -The Subject - Building Resilience

## Lesson Objectives:

- To build resilience in students by making them aware that God believes in them.
- For students to learn that they have a choice in how to respond to hurtful words.
- To empower students to know how to respond to bullies in order to make them stop speaking hurtful words.

## Lesson Materials:

- Ping Pong Balls
- Large cardboard box opened up flat
- Print out 'God believes in me!' shield for students to cut out
- Video clip: The WISDOM of the Sticks and Stones Slogan
- Video clip: Student ATTACKS Speaker!
- Video clip: How to disarm a bully

## Lesson Overview:

**Stage 1:** Resilience - Building a shield against cruel 'ping pong ball' words.

**Stage 2:** Modeh Ani – God believes in ME!

**Stage 3:** Sticks and Stones Discussion.

**Stage 4:** Experiment: Fight Hurtful Words with Kindness.

**Stage 5:** Conclusion and Summary.

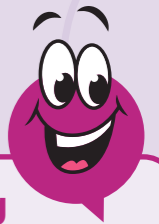
## Assessment Method:

- Within the discussions, students will show their understanding by expressing out their views and voting 'with their feet'.
- At the conclusion and summary stage, ask each student to report what they have learnt from the class.

## Differentiation:

- Acting for students who learn kinaesthetically.
- Students will colour and decorate the Modeh Ani message for those who are more creative.
- Video clips are shown for those who learn better with media.

## STAGE 1



### Resilience - Building a shield against cruel 'ping pong ball' words:

Teacher should stand against a wall and arm the students with 1 ping pong ball each.

Explain to the students that cruel words thrown at someone can hurt them.

Have one child at a time say something 'nasty' and throw the ball at you - reaction should be that of pain.

**Discussion Part 1:** How can we stop words hurting us? We need to build a shield!

**Q.** What type of shield can we use to protect us from hurtful words?

**A.** The knowledge that we are great - no matter what anyone else says!

Get a flattened cardboard box and write on it 'I AM GREAT!'. Get one student to stand behind the 'shield' and the other students try to hit the subject by throwing ping pong balls.

The ability to ignore nasty words is called 'resilience'.

We have the ability to build resilience when we know that we are great - no matter what anyone says!

## STAGE 2



### Modeh Ani – God believes in ME!:

When we wake up in the morning, the very first words out of our mouth are Modeh Ani.

But what does it mean?

מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם שֶׁהַחַיָּוִת בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי בְּחַמְלָה, רַבָּה אֲמוּנָתְךָ

'I give thanks to you Hashem, my King, for returning my soul to my body because **You believe in me**'

Discussion: What do you think that means '**You believe in me**'?

Surely, we should wake up in the morning and say 'We believe in YOU God'.



When we wake up in the morning, God gives us back our soul for a brand-new day because God believes that we can be great!!!

Each morning, the very first words out of our mouths is that God believes in us!

If we are important to God - then who cares what other people say!

Give every student the 'God believes in me' shield for them to cut out. (You may choose between English or Hebrew version.)

STAGE 3



**Sticks and Stones Discussion:**



In preparation watch this clip: [The WISDOM of the Sticks and Stones Slogan](#)

On the board write out: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never break me."

Pick opposite sides of the classroom and ask students to stand up and vote whether they agree, or disagree, with the statement.

**Points to ponder:**

- Perhaps it makes a difference to whom we are saying the sentence: the speaker, or the subject, of the nasty speech.
- Given the choice – Would you rather be hit in the face, or be called a bad name? Why?

**Conclusion:**

It is never okay to bully or speak badly to another person. However, as far as the subject is concerned, if I train myself not to care what someone says about me - I have the ability to push away their nasty words and not be harmed.

Stick and stones will always hurt but words can only hurt me if I allow them to.

If appropriate, and have enough time, show the following clip to the class: [The WISDOM of the Sticks and Stones Slogan](#) to the class.

**Experiment: Fight Hurtful Words with Kindness:**

Choose a student to 'bully' you in front of the class.

As they bully you, become more and more upset and throw nasty words back at them.

This argument will escalate with no 'happy ending'.

However, try to do the experiment again. This time, only respond with kindness to the 'bully'. It does not take long for the bully to be short of words to say.



To see an example of this in action watch: [Student ATTACKS Speaker!](#)

When we fight hurtful words with more hurtful words – all that happens is an escalation in the argument.

However, when we reply to hurtful words with kind words (even though it may be incredibly difficult) we may have the ability to stop the bullying.



Alternatively, show the students this video which explains the 'science' of how speaking kindly to a bully stops them from bullying.

[How to disarm a bully](#)

STAGE 5



**Conclusion and Summary:**

- Words can only hurt me if I allow them to.
- We should build resilience with the understanding that God believes in me.
- If people come to attack me with hurtful words – responding with kindness can stop them.





[www.cleanspeech.co.uk](http://www.cleanspeech.co.uk)

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