

# Listen To The Water

## Classroom Lesson Plan & Activity Guide

Grades K–3 · Ages 4–8 · 45–60 minutes

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Nature & Water

ASL Sign Language

Empathy

Inclusion

**About this guide:** This free lesson plan helps teachers and librarians bring *Listen To The Water* into the classroom. It includes discussion questions, a real ASL sign language activity, a writing prompt, and an environmental reflection exercise — all designed for Grades K–3.

## About the Book

When animals around the world sense that the planet is changing — lakes emptying, rain growing scarce, the earth growing tired — they try everything to warn the humans. Elephants, lions, birds all send their message, but no one listens. Until a gorilla named Kara chooses a different, quieter way to communicate: **sign language**.

This warm, rhythmic picture book explores **empathy, communication, the environment, and inclusion** — and ends with real ASL signs children can learn and use.

## Learning Objectives

**Science & Environment** Understand why water is a precious shared resource.

**Social-Emotional** Practise empathy by taking an animal's perspective.

**Language Arts** Engage in close listening and oral discussion.

**ASL / Communication** Learn 4 real American Sign Language gestures.

**Writing** Express ideas through a short creative writing prompt.

## Before Reading (5–10 min)

**Activate prior knowledge.** Show students the cover. Ask them to look at the illustration before reading a single word.

### Discussion starters:

- What animals do you see on the cover? What do you think they might be feeling?
- Have you ever tried to tell someone something important but they didn't listen? How did that feel?
- What does water mean to you? Where does your water come from?
- If animals could talk to humans, what do you think they would say?

## During Reading (15–20 min)

Read the book aloud with expression. Pause at these moments to keep students engaged:

<b>Pause 1</b>	After the elephants try to warn the humans	Ask: "What did the elephants do? Did it work? Why not?"
<b>Pause 2</b>	After each animal tries a different approach	Ask: "What's different about how this animal communicates? Have you ever communicated without words?"
<b>Pause 3</b>	When Kara the gorilla appears	Ask: "What makes Kara different from the others? What do you think Kara is going to do?"
<b>Pause 4</b>	At the ASL sign language pages	PAUSE — do the activity on the next section of this guide before continuing.

## ASL Sign Language Activity (10 min)

**Why this matters:** American Sign Language is a complete, natural language used by millions of Deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the USA and Canada. Learning even a few signs builds awareness, empathy, and communication skills.

Teach your students these 4 signs from the book. Practise each one together before moving to the next:

### WATER

Form a W with your dominant hand (3 fingers up). Tap your chin twice.

*Resource: search 'ASL water sign' on Handspeak.com*

### LISTEN / HEAR

Cup your hand behind your ear and tilt your head slightly toward it.

*Resource: search 'ASL listen sign' on Handspeak.com*

## HELP

Make a thumbs-up with one hand, place it on your open palm, and lift both hands up together.

*Resource: search 'ASL help sign' on [Handspeak.com](https://www.handspeak.com)*

## ANIMAL

Place your fingertips on your chest and bend them in and out like an animal breathing.

*Resource: search 'ASL animal sign' on [Handspeak.com](https://www.handspeak.com)*

**Extension:** Ask students to invent their own sign for a word related to the story (e.g. "river", "gorilla", "save"). Share with the class.

## After Reading — Discussion (10 min)

1. Why did Kara's message work when the other animals' messages didn't?
2. What does it mean to truly listen to someone? Is there a difference between hearing and listening?
3. The animals were trying to protect the water. What is one thing YOU can do to protect water?
4. Kara used sign language. Can you think of other ways people communicate without speaking?
5. How did the story make you feel? Did your feelings change by the end?
6. If you were an animal in this story, which one would you be and what message would you send?

## Writing Prompt

**Prompt:** Imagine you are an animal — any animal you choose. You have an important message for the humans on Earth. What would your message be? How would you send it? Write 3–5 sentences (or draw your answer if you prefer).

My animal is: \_\_\_\_\_

My message is:

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How I would send it:

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## Water Pledge Activity

In the story, the animals worked together to protect water. Now it's your students' turn. Each student writes ONE thing they commit to doing to save water.

### My Water Pledge:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, promise to \_\_\_\_\_ to help protect our water and our planet.

*Tip: Display pledges on a classroom 'Water Wall' or photograph them to share with families.*

## Cross-Curricular Connections

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**Science**

Water cycle, habitats, animal communication systems

**Social Studies**

Environmental responsibility, community and global citizenship

**Language Arts**

Author's purpose, making inferences, vocabulary: empathy, communicate, protect

**Art**

Students draw or paint their favourite animal from the story

**PE / Movement**

Act out how each animal in the book moves and communicates

## Vocabulary Builder

Introduce these words before or during reading:

**Empathy** Understanding and sharing the feelings of another.

**Communicate** To share information or feelings with others.

**Protect** To keep something safe from harm or damage.

**Scarce** Not enough of something; hard to find.

**Sign language** A language that uses hands, face, and body instead of voice.

**Habitat** The natural home or environment of an animal or plant.

## Differentiation Tips

Grades K–1 (Ages 4–6)	Grades 2–3 (Ages 7–8)
Focus on the ASL signs and drawing activity. Simplify discussion to: What animal do you love? What does water feel like?	Encourage full written responses to the writing prompt. Add a research mini-project: find 3 ways to conserve water.

## About the Author

**Tansil Kiliç Sidar** was born in Istanbul, Turkey. She studied communications at university and, while working in marketing, volunteered for various children's projects with non-profit organisations. She now writes stories that encourage children to see themselves as part of nature, the universe, and life itself — growing up with joy, love, and respect for all living beings. She lives in Brussels, Belgium with her husband, son, and cat.

**Elif Balta Parks** is the illustrator of *Listen To The Water*.

### Get the book for your classroom or library:

Listen To The Water (English) — ISBN 978-9083653419

Ecoute l'eau (French edition) — ISBN 978-9083653402

Available on Amazon.com and Amazon.fr

Search: "**Listen To The Water Tansil Kilic Sidar**"

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