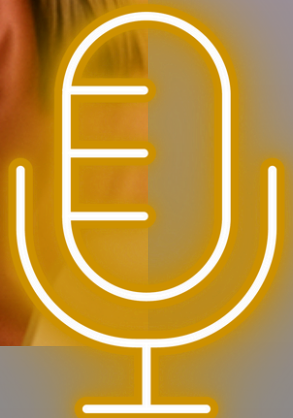


SOCIAL PLAY-BY-PLAY

A PODCAST-STYLE ACTIVITY TO BUILD
REAL-WORLD SOCIAL SKILLS

FREEBIE



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Thank you for respecting the work that went into creating this resource and for helping us continue to make meaningful tools for educators, families, and students.



How to Use This Freebie

This free sample from the Social Play-by-Play packet invites students to step into the role of a podcast commentator, observing a real-time social interaction and reflecting on emotional shifts, peer dynamics, and unspoken intentions.

Whether you're teaching in a classroom, running a small group, or working one-on-one, this resource helps students practice emotional inference, perspective taking, and expressive language in a way that feels modern and engaging.

What's Included:

- ✓ 1 podcast-style social script (scene-based)
- ✓ 1 student reflection sheet
- ✓ 1 mini anchor chart for emotional turning points
- ✓ 1 vocabulary sneak peek



Teaching Tips:

- Use this activity as a discussion warm-up, journaling prompt, or group role play.
- Read the script aloud or assign roles for students to act out and narrate.
- Encourage students to pause and identify the moment the emotional “vibe” shifted.
- Use the anchor chart and vocabulary page to support students in writing or podcast-style commentary.



How to Use This Freebie Continued

Prompts for Student Commentary:

The suggested prompts help students start their reflections and also build stronger sentences by encouraging the use of conjunctions (like *because*, *when*, *but*, *so*).

These words help students:

- Explain cause and effect
“She looked away because she felt left out.”
- Show a shift or contrast
“He was joking at first, but then his tone changed.”
- Add sequence and clarity
“Things were going fine until he interrupted.”

Using sentence starters with conjunctions strengthens both writing and thinking, giving students tools to express social observations more clearly and with purpose.

Suggested Prompts for Student Commentary:

- “Something shifted when...”
- “You could tell their tone changed when...”
- “I think she felt __ because he...”

This freebie offers a glimpse into a deeper resource designed to build real-world SEL skills through story, tone, and teen voice. Students become observers, interpreters, and storytellers.



Before you Begin

This Is Not a Program or Prescribed Method

It's a flexible teaching tool designed to support high school students in developing social insight, critical thinking, and communication skills through engaging, podcast-style scenes and guided reflection.

This resource was created in response to a challenge many educators and therapists face:

Traditional SEL stories are either overly simplified or too complex too fast, making it difficult for students to connect with the content or participate meaningfully in social-emotional discussions.

Some teens struggle with layered peer dynamics, emotional nuance, or perspective-taking. This is especially true in situations involving subtle shifts in tone, intent, or exclusion.

That's why each scene in this packet is carefully crafted and developmentally scaled to help students succeed without overwhelming them, while honoring differences in cognition, language, and life experience.

Aligned With Learning Standards

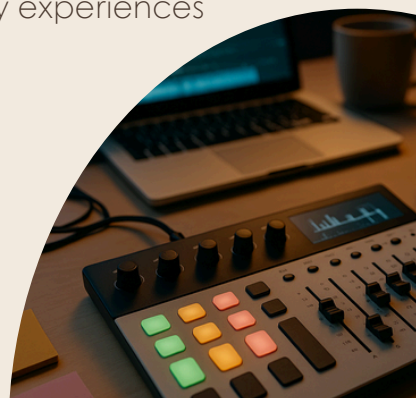
Each scene and reflection sheet is designed to:

- Build CASEL-aligned SEL competencies like self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills
- Support emotional inference, and pragmatic language development
- Strengthen narrative comprehension, reflection, and emotional reasoning
- Align with key high school academic standards, including:

CCSS RL.9-10.3 – Analyze how complex characters develop and interact

CCSS SL.9-10.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

CCSS W.9-10.3d – Use precise words and sensory language to convey experiences



Contents

Scripted Scene

Reassigned

Reflection Questions

Open-ended prompts for the scene to answer questions, reflect, and build social inferencing

Commentator Vocabulary

Anchor Chart

Visual guide to social-emotional cues (tone, body language, facial expression)

Self-Grading Rubric

Rubric to self reflect on social emotional awareness in others

By Social Scribe





Scripted Commentator Scene

Social Play-By-Play
Scene with social themes



Reassigned



Scene Setting:

Location: High school classroom, first week of school during a group project

Characters:

- **Commentator** – Observes tone, emotional shifts, and body language
- **Camila** – Organized, eager to work with her friends
- **Jade** – Camila's close friend, friendly but avoids conflict
- **Mr. Brooks** – The teacher, reassigns partners unexpectedly
- **Eli** – New student, assigned to Camila's group

Script

Commentator:

It's the first real group assignment of the school year, and you can feel the buzz in the room. Camila and Jade slide into their usual seats, already chatting about how they'll divide the work.

Camila:

"I'll handle the slides, and you can present like always, right?"

Jade:

"Totally. Let's just knock it out before Friday."

Commentator:

Just as they're getting settled, Mr. Brooks steps in and starts rearranging groups. You can see Camila's eyes narrow a bit, she clearly wasn't expecting this change.



Reassigned Continued

Mr. Brooks:

“Camila, Jade, you’ll be working with Eli today. Camila, can you catch him up?”

Commentator:

Camila forces a polite nod but her smile tightens. Jade gives a small shrug, but stays quiet. Eli walks over slowly, notebook in hand, trying to look like this doesn’t bother him.

Eli:

“Hey. Um... what’s the project about again?”

Commentator:

Camila shifts in her seat, her voice cool.

Camila:

“We’re doing ecosystems. I already made the outline, so... just follow along.”

Commentator:

Jade glances between them and lightly nudges Camila’s foot under the table, but says nothing. Eli nods but stays quiet, now scribbling something without looking up. Camila goes back to typing faster now.

That pause in her voice? That shift in energy? Something just changed in the group dynamic. Let’s break it down...



Educator Resources

- Reflection worksheet that can be used for all stories and for each story
- Vocabulary Tools
- Answer key with emotional clues and student inference tips



Reassigned

Focus: Back to School • Emotional Awareness • Group Dynamics

Reflect on the Scene

Answer each question below based on the social interaction you just read. Use the sentence starters to guide your thinking and support your inferences.

1. What was the social turning point in this scene?

When did the energy, mood, or connection shift between characters?

 **Sentence Starter:** “Things were going fine until...”

2. What nonverbal clues helped you understand how someone was feeling?

What did the commentator notice that others may have missed?

 **Sentence Starter:** “Even though Camila didn’t say it, the Commentator noticed...”

3. How might each person have interpreted the moment differently?

Explain what each person might have thought or felt even if they didn’t say it out loud.

 **Sentence Starter:** “Camila might have thought ____, but Eli probably felt ____ because...”

4. What could each character do next to repair or clarify the situation? (Optional for journaling or discussion)

 **Sentence Starters:**

“If I were Camila, I might...”

“If I were Jade, I could...”

“If I were Eli, I might...”



How to Use This Vocabulary Chart

This chart is your go-to cheat sheet for sounding like a real podcast commentator or social observer. Whether you're describing a scene, analyzing a reaction, or writing your own script — these words will help you explain what people are doing, how they're feeling, and how things change.

- **Use emotion words to show how someone might feel inside**
- **Use body language and tone words to describe how they're acting or speaking**
- **Use narration words to make your commentary more detailed and interesting**

Example: Instead of saying "He was mad," you might say:

"He crossed his arms and said it in a flat tone. He definitely showed frustrated."

Keep it nearby while writing or speaking and try out new words to build your voice!

Emotion Vocabulary
overlooked, uneasy, embarrassed, awkward, irritated, confused, rejected, regretful, betrayed
Social Signal Verbs
shrugged, muttered, glanced, hesitated, avoided, trailed, stiffened, shifted, retreated, leaned in
Tone and Delivery Words
flat, playful, sarcastic, hesitant, defensive, hopeful, passive, tense, dismissive
Body Language Descriptors
eyes narrowed, shoulders slumped, voice dropped, stepped back, posture shifted, lips pressed
Vibe/Scene Shift Vocabulary
the mood shifted, tension rose, the vibe changed, energy dropped, silence settled, things got quiet
Perspective-Taking Starters
<i>They might have felt..., She could have assumed..., It seemed like..., From their point of view...</i>
Repair and Response Language
clarified, apologized, acknowledged, made a joke, changed the subject, offered support



Spot the Shift: Emotional Turns in Conversation

When something changes in a conversation, like a tone shift, a pause, or a sudden silence, you may be witnessing an **emotional turn**. These subtle changes help us understand what people are really feeling, even if they don't say it directly.

Signal Type	What to Watch For	Examples
Body Language	Change in posture, crossing arms, turning away	Slouched shoulders, avoiding eye contact
Tone of Voice	Voice gets quieter, sharper, or more flat	"It's fine." (but said in a cold tone)
Facial Expression	Frown, tight smile, raised eyebrows	Quick eye roll, lip pressed tight
Pace/Pausing	Long pause, rushing speech, sudden silence	Suddenly stops talking mid-sentence

Use These Sentence Starters:

- "Something shifted when..."
- "You could tell the vibe changed because..."
- "Even though no one said it, the energy felt different after..."



Vocabulary Sneak Peek

These words show up in the script or help describe social shifts in subtle but important ways. Use them when writing or narrating your own play-by-play.

Word	What It Means	How It Might Show Up
tone	The way someone says something (emotion in their voice)	“Her tone changed when the group shifted.”
hesitate	To pause or act unsure before speaking or doing something	“Eli hesitated before joining the group.”
awkward	Uncomfortable or tense in a social moment	“That pause made things feel awkward.”
excluded	Left out or not included in the group	“Eli might have felt excluded.”



Purpose of the Vocabulary Sneak Peek

Teacher Guide: Step-by-Step

How to Use the Vocabulary Sneak Peek (Educator Guide):

The Vocabulary Sneak Peek is a student-facing support tool designed to increase awareness with social-emotional language and encourage precision when reflecting on peer interactions. Each term was chosen based on its relevance to emotional inference, tone, and subtle social shifts developing perspective-taking.

This chart helps students:

- **Recognize and label emotional or social cues**
- **Expand their expressive vocabulary when narrating or reflecting**
- **Bridge their understanding between character behavior and emotional language**
- **Transfer vocabulary into their own podcast-style commentary or written analysis**

Preview this chart with students before or after reading a scene. Encourage learners to use at least one term in their reflection and to revisit the list during small group discussions, journaling, or commentary practice.



Sample Responses + Educator Key

How to Use:

These sample inferences, emotional cues, and reflection answers are meant to support teacher modeling, group discussion, or student scaffolding. There are no “right” answers, just flexible interpretations based on body language, tone, and subtle social shifts.

Key Format for Each Scene:

1. Scene Title
2. Turning Point (Educator Summary)
3. Emotional/Nonverbal Clues to Highlight
4. Sample Student Inferences or Responses to 1–2 key reflection questions

Turning Point (Educator Summary):

When Camila glances at the new group list and hesitates before walking away, Eli's hopeful energy drops. The dynamic visibly shifts when Jade and Camila start chatting without him.

Emotional/Nonverbal Clues to Highlight:

- Eli walks toward them with an open expression, pauses
- Camila glances quickly, doesn't acknowledge him
- Jade and Camila begin talking, don't include Eli
- Eli shrinks back, posture closes off, no eye contact

 **Note:** This scene highlights the subtle ways that group changes can spark social confusion, self-doubt, and unspoken exclusion even when words are polite.

Sample Student Inference (Q2 or Q3):

“Even though Eli didn't say anything, the Commentator noticed that he stopped walking and looked down. I think he felt left out or awkward when the others didn't look at him.”

Possible Reflection Answer (Q3):

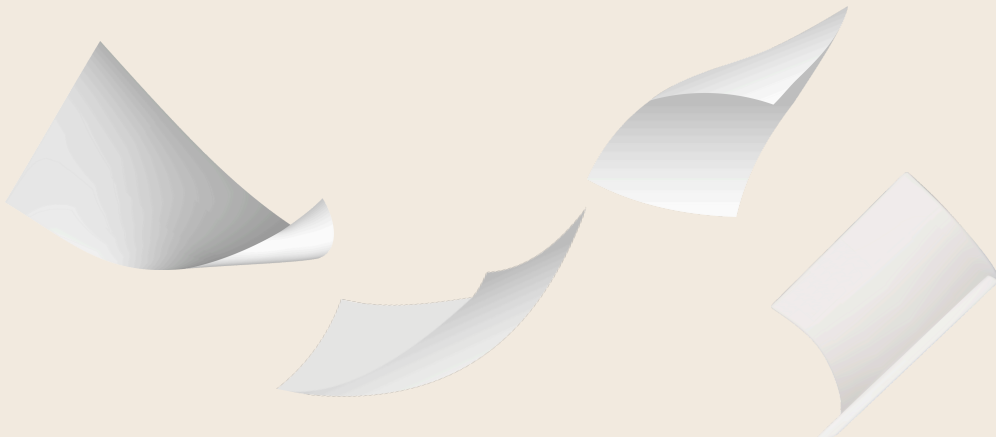
“Camila might have thought that Eli wasn't really interested in joining them. But Eli probably felt unsure or unwanted because she didn't make eye contact or invite him into the conversation.”





Other Printables

Bonus SEL Tracker



SEL Skill Progress Tracker

This tracker is designed to help monitor student growth in foundational social-emotional skills. Each row represents a key SEL skill targeted through the stories in this packet. Teachers can use checkmarks, dates, or short notes to indicate when a student demonstrates progress or mastery. This tool can support IEP documentation, goal tracking, or self-reflection portfolios.

Student	Facial Expression	Body Language	Tone of Voice	Pace and Pausing	Comments or Notes



SEL Skill Progress Tracker

Use this tracker to self-reflect on your awareness and observation of social-emotional skills. Each row represents a key SEL skill targeted through the stories in this packet. Use checkmarks, dates, or short notes to indicate when and how you did. This tool can help you self-reflect on what skills you want to practice.

Student	Facial Expression	Body Language	Tone of Voice	Pace and Pausing	Comments or Notes



SEL Skill Progress Tracker



Student	Facial Expression	Body Language	Tone of Voice	Pace and Pausing	Comments or Notes

Skill Scale:

- Level 1** Needs explicit prompting and modeling; rarely identifies cues without direct support.
- Level 2** Identifies some cues with frequent guidance; beginning to connect cues to emotion or meaning.
- Level 3** Recognizes most cues with minimal support; can explain emotional shifts or changes in tone.
- Level 4** Independently interprets expressive cues and articulates their emotional or narrative significance.



SEL Skill Progress Tracker

Below is a 4-point SEL Skill Progress Rubric designed for educator/SLP use to judge student performance over time during reading, discussion, or SEL-based activities. Each scale point reflects both the level of independence and what the student can do, while subtly indicating areas of support still needed.

Skill Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Facial Expressions	Needs support to notice facial clues; often misses emotional relevance.	Recognizes basic expressions (e.g., happy, sad) with prompting.	Identifies subtle expressions (e.g., smirking, furrowing brows) and links them to feelings.	Accurately interprets nuanced expressions and explains their impact on meaning or tone.
Body Language	Rarely notices posture, gestures, or body shifts; relies on direct questions.	Begins noticing key gestures (e.g., crossing arms, slumping) with support.	Identifies body language cues and uses them to infer mood or intent.	Integrates body language into broader interpretations of character emotions or relationships.
Tone of Voice	Struggles to detect emotional tone changes in dialogue; needs modeling.	Hears tone differences (e.g., angry vs. calm) when prompted.	Describes tone using emotion words; can explain shifts with minimal cues.	Independently analyzes tone to explain character conflict, sarcasm, or emotional change.
Pace and Pausing	Does not yet recognize the importance of timing or rhythm in speech.	Notices hesitation or pauses when guided; may connect to confusion or tension.	Identifies pacing and pausing to infer discomfort, nervousness, or emphasis.	Explains how pacing enhances emotion, builds tension, or shows internal struggle.

Skill Scale:

- Level 1** Needs explicit prompting and modeling; rarely identifies cues without direct support.
- Level 2** Identifies some cues with frequent guidance; beginning to connect cues to emotion or meaning.
- Level 3** Recognizes most cues with minimal support; can explain emotional shifts or changes in tone.
- Level 4** Independently interprets expressive cues and articulates their emotional or narrative significance.



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a red pen, poised to write on a document. The background is blurred, showing a person in a white lab coat. A semi-transparent white rectangle is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'Terms' and 'SOCIAL PLAY-BY-PLAY'.

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With clarity, creativity, and purpose,

Kristian Hagen

Creator of Social Scribe and Scribbles



Thank You for Supporting Connection and Growth

You just empowered your students to think, feel, and connect more deeply through structured SEL storytelling. Whether in a classroom, therapy room, or counseling space, your choice to teach emotional language and social perspective is planting the seeds for lifelong relational skills.



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