

Name _____ Date _____ Focus _____

Shut Up, Ellie!

A lesson about giving other people room to speak for themselves

Nobody actually said the title words. In Elliana Ivy's house, telling someone to shut up was not respectful. Still, if interruptions made noise on paper, Ellie's voice would have filled the room with giant, bouncing letters: BLURT! BLURT! BLURT!

Ari was sitting at the table completing a punishment reflection. An adult asked him, "What choice did you make?" Ari opened his mouth, but Ellie answered first. "He did this, and then he did that, and I think he should write -" The adult held up a hand. "Ellie, this is Ari's question. Please let him answer."

Ari tried again. The next question asked how he could make a better choice. Before he could finish one sentence, Ellie zipped in like a game-show contestant who had swallowed the buzzer. "I know! I know! He should -" The adult reminded her again to stop interrupting, mind her own business, and allow Ari to think for himself.

Ellie believed she was being helpful. But help is not helpful when nobody asked for it and someone has already told you to stop. Every time Ellie supplied an answer, she stole Ari's chance to explain his own thinking, accept responsibility, and learn from his consequence. She also made the adults repeat the same direction instead of focusing on Ari.

Then Ellie interrupted once more. The room became quiet. The adult announced that Elliana Ivy had won a magnificent prize: her very own behavior-reflection packet. It came with no trophy, no candy, and absolutely no confetti. Ellie stared at the packet. Apparently, the grand prize for refusing to stay out of someone else's punishment was receiving a punishment of her own. That seemed like a very inefficient way to spend an afternoon.

Ellie finally understood that minding her own business did not mean ignoring danger or keeping a harmful secret. If someone was unsafe, hurt, or needed help, she should tell a trusted adult. But Ari answering a reflection question was not an emergency. No ambulance was needed. No rescue helicopter was circling the kitchen. Ari simply needed enough quiet to speak for himself.

Ellie made a better plan. When another person was asked a question, she would keep her answer inside her own head. She could move to another activity, take a slow breath, or silently count to ten. If she truly had useful information, she could wait until Ari finished and ask, "May I add something?" Most importantly, when an adult told her to stop interjecting, she would stop the first time.

Ellie apologized to Ari for speaking over him and to the adults for ignoring their directions. She could not undo the interruptions, but she could practice self-control. The next time Ari was asked a question, Ellie closed her lips, gave him the floor, and discovered something amazing: the world kept spinning even when she was not the person answering.

Self-control reset: Stop. Listen. Let the other person finish. Speak only when invited.

Minding my own business gives other people room to think, answer, and learn.

Name _____

Date _____

Focus _____

Circle the best answer.

Questions 1-10

1 Why does the story say Ellie's voice would make 'BLURT!' appear on paper?

- A. She kept interrupting before Ari could answer.
- B. She was practicing her spelling words.
- C. Ari asked her to shout the answers.
- D. The adults could not hear her.

6 What caused Ellie to receive her own consequence?

- A. She kept interjecting after being told to stop.
- B. She quietly counted to ten.
- C. She asked permission to add something.
- D. She warned an adult about danger.

2 What was Ari doing at the table?

- A. Eating a snack
- B. Completing a punishment reflection
- C. Building a model helicopter
- D. Writing Ellie's answers

7 When should Ellie tell a trusted adult instead of simply minding her own business?

- A. Whenever Ari pauses before answering
- B. Whenever she knows a possible answer
- C. When someone may be unsafe, hurt, or need help
- D. When another person receives a worksheet

3 What direction did the adult give Ellie?

- A. Answer every question quickly.
- B. Correct Ari whenever possible.
- C. Let Ari answer and stop interrupting.
- D. Leave the house immediately.

8 Which choice is part of Ellie's better plan?

- A. Talk louder so the adult listens.
- B. Wait until Ari finishes and ask permission before adding something.
- C. Whisper the answer while Ari is speaking.
- D. Leave the room without permission every time.

4 Why were Ellie's answers not actually helpful?

- A. They were written in pencil.
- B. They prevented Ari from thinking and answering for himself.
- C. They made Ari finish too early.
- D. They were all about helicopters.

9 What does 'interjecting' mean in this story?

- A. Interrupting by inserting a comment or answer
- B. Writing neatly on a worksheet
- C. Helping during an emergency
- D. Apologizing after a mistake

5 What was Ellie's 'magnificent prize'?

- A. A trophy and candy
- B. A trip to a game show
- C. Her own behavior-reflection packet
- D. Permission to answer for Ari

10 What is the main lesson of the story?

- A. The fastest answer is always the best answer.
- B. It is helpful to answer every question for other people.
- C. People deserve room to speak; listen, wait, and stop interrupting when told.
- D. Children should never tell adults when someone is unsafe.

Name _____ Date _____ Focus _____

Complete this page before checking the answers.

Be honest and specific. Explain what you will do differently next time.

1 What was Ari trying to do when I kept interrupting and answering for him?

2 What did the adult tell me to stop doing, and how many times did I ignore that direction?

3 How did my interruptions make Ari's punishment and the adults' job more difficult?

4 Why is answering for someone else different from helping that person?

5 What should I do the next time Ari or another person is asked a question?

6 Write three specific choices I will use to mind my own business and show self-control.

Name _____ Date _____ Focus _____

Reading Answers

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. A | 6. A |
| 2. B | 7. C |
| 3. C | 8. B |
| 4. B | 9. A |
| 5. C | 10. C |

Adult Check-In

- ☐ The child identified that Ari was completing his own punishment reflection.
- ☐ The interruptions and answering for Ari were named without excuses.
- ☐ The child explained how the behavior prevented Ari from thinking for himself.
- ☐ The child understood the difference between an emergency and unwanted interjecting.
- ☐ The plan includes waiting, listening, and asking permission before adding information.
- ☐ The child understands that an adult's direction to stop should be followed the first time.

Self-control plan

Apology to Ari and the adults completed: _____

Next opportunity to demonstrate changed behavior: _____

Adult notes: _____