

## NO TALKING by Andrew Clements

(Simon & Schuster, 2007)

*Something strange is going on with the way-too-talkative class nicknamed the “unshushables”-they have fallen silent.*



### Discussion Questions

1. **Before the “official” contest**, Dave decides to stop talking – why?  
(Report on India p. 8, quote from Gandhi “one day each week Gandhi did not speak at all. Gandhi believed this was a way to bring order to his mind.”)
2. **Dave and Lynsey.** How would you describe Dave – (loudmouth, likes to be in charge). How about Lynsey?  
On p. 19 Clements says, “Dave and Lynsey were king and queen of the cootie clingers” – what does the author mean by this?  
Why is this particular group of 5th graders called the unshushables?
3. **The contest.** How did the dare happen? What are the rules of the contest? (Three word limit to adults at school, no talking at home, on school bus, two days length.)
4. **The teachers.** How do the teachers deal with the no talking contest? Music teacher – they hummed  
Gym – played dodge ball  
Science teacher, Mrs. Marlow – uses scientific inquiry to deduce what is happening. Once she figures out what was going on why didn't she tell the other teachers?  
Language arts teacher, Mr. Burton – most creative, plays a – whisper down the lane type activity with three words. In his 2nd class they could only write – why do you think it was harder for the kids to write than talk?
5. **Dave and Lynsey** have their own private no-talking match. The winner gets to write a big L on the loser's head.  
P. 79 “Dave wishes it didn't have to be a war.” Why do you think he said this?  
P. 94 Lynsey says thinking and being quiet was different and good. How are these two loudmouths changing as a result of not talking?
6. **Mrs. Hiatt.** “The Principal didn't just like being in charge she needed to be in charge.” At the teachers meeting p. 99 she says, “These children need to learn to be quiet when it's right to be quiet, and they need to talk and participate at the right times too.”  
Mr. Burton says, “they didn't listen to us when we asked them to stop being noisy, why do you think they are going to listen to you when you ask them to talk?”  
P. 106 Was the principal right to demand that enough was enough and that they had to stop their contest immediately?
7. **P. 118 Mrs. Overby** the Social Studies teacher had to make a decision - should she try to follow the Principal's orders or just let the kids continue with their game? She says she understands Civil disobedience.  
Did she make the right decision?  
P. 122 in music class Taron sends a note around which says “Singing is not talking. Deal?” And both boys and girls agree. What did this accomplish?  
(The Principals ultimatum “you must talk” did one thing – brought the boys and girls together.)

8. **P. 130 Dave** yells at the Principal. "I do not have to talk now if I don't want to ...." What this the right thing to do?  
How did Mrs. Haitt react? Why does she change her mind? (p. 135 apologizes for getting angry)  
After the principal apologizes and the whole school takes up the no talking/three word experiment why were the kindergarteners released from the three word limit?

*Caroline Ward*  
*Youth Services Coordinator*  
*The Ferguson Library, Stamford Ct*